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ABSTRACT

The goal in this collection of 22 essays is to consider youth policy based on the themes of promoting youth development, building supportive communities, and reforming systems/linking services. These themes arise from the editors' and contributors' belief that policy makers, program planners, practitioners and researchers need to recognize and emphasize the importance of holistic and positive approaches to youth issues as well as examine the impact that youth has upon family and community. They argue that the United States has an unprecedented opportunity to create a national youth agenda--a climate within which building a base of community supports and opportunities for young people may be possible. However, a massive paradigm shift is required if this agenda is to have positive youth development, rather than deterrence and punishment, as its base: the operating assumption must shift from thinking that youth problems, including violence, drug addiction, and teen pregnancy, are the principal barriers to youth development, and that problem prevention should be the national focus. Rather, youth development needs to be viewed as the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems. (TS)

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CONTRACT WITH AMERICA'S YOUTH:

Toward a National Youth Development Agenda

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EDITORS' PREFACE

Our goal in this collection of thoughtful essays is to consider youth policy based on the themes of *prevention, promotion, productivity*, and *preparation*. The editors' introductory essay provides a framework for reading the collection. We hope you will find that the power and insight of the various pieces make them worth reading.

Three major themes emerge from this collection when read as a group -- *promoting youth development, building supportive communities, and reforming systems/linking services*. Increasingly, policy makers, program planners, practitioners and researchers stress the importance of taking a holistic and positive approach to addressing youth issues and of considering carefully the impact on youth of family and community. Numerous examples of the prevalence of these themes abound; the most telling may be how frequently the phrase "It takes an entire village to raise a child" is used in speeches and as a quote at the beginning of reports.

Such concepts deserve discussion and debate. It is even more important that thoughtful people struggle with how they can be put into *effective practice*. Starting with any one of these themes -- promoting youth development, building supportive communities, reforming systems -- leads to interesting ideas and new proposals. But such ideas and proposals do not necessarily converge. It is too easy to see them as three separate agendas. The three themes must not remain disconnected. Social policy in this country will turn a significant corner only when it is based on a deep understanding that positive outcomes for youth and families depend on supportive communities and that building supportive communities and promoting youth development are the only engines that can drive fundamental system reform.

Without a rigorous process of mapping current activities against a conceptual framework linking these three concepts, solutions will remain piecemeal. They will appear primarily in the form of new programs paved over old, obscuring the realization that what may really be needed are completely different approaches and paths that lead where none have gone before. It is our hope that this publication makes a case for the importance of this realization and provides both structure and substance to this emerging and quite critical public policy debate.

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The editors also thank Vinny Spera and Susan Kim for their fine work in preparing this manuscript for printing.

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CONTRACT WITH AMERICA'S YOUTH:
Toward A National Youth Development Agenda

INTRODUCTION

There is an unprecedented opportunity to create a national youth agenda in this country -- a climate within which building a base of community supports and opportunities for young people may be possible. But a massive paradigm shift is required if this agenda is to have positive youth development, rather than deterrence and punishment, as its base. Our operating assumption must shift from thinking that youth problems, including violence, drug addiction, and teen pregnancy, are the principal barriers to youth development -- and that, therefore, the national focus should be on problem prevention. Rather, we need to view youth development as the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems. There is a need for a rich, new vision built on theory and research, supported by effective practice, bolstered with ample evidence, and made operable with effective implementation strategies. A vision that resonates with all who must enforce it -- including young people themselves.

At the core of this vision of youth development are two basic premises and corresponding corollaries:

- ***Premise One:*** *Youth development is an ongoing process in which young people are engaged and invested. Throughout this process, young people seek ways to meet their basic physical and social needs and to build the competencies and connections they need for survival and success. All youth are engaged in the process of development.*

- **Corollary One:** Promoting youth development requires understanding, assessment, strengthening and integrating not just youth development programs, but the full complement of people, places, and institutions that form the ecological environment in which young people develop. Whether and how children and youth meet their basic needs and acquire the maturity, confidence, and skills critical to full participation in society depends on the quality and constancy of the overall set of the influences in their lives.

- ***Premise Two:*** *Youth development is marked by the acquisition of a broad range of competencies and the demonstration of a full complement of connections to self, others, and the larger community. Confidence, compassion, commitment and character are terms commonly used to express the attitudes and behaviors that determine whether and how learned competencies will be used.*

- **Corollary Two:** Promoting youth development requires attention not only to the *content* of what is taught and shared, but to *contexts* in which learning interactions take place. Learning is mediated by individuals. Engagement -- the active connection of youth to self, peers, adults, groups, community as both recipient and doer -- is a prerequisite of competency development. This means that young people need to be nurtured, guided, empowered, and challenged -- asked to do important work and recognized and honored by adults for doing it.

The implications of these premises and corollaries are considerable. They suggest needed changes in the way services and supports for youth are planned, prioritized, structured, delivered, and assessed. They call for an examination of the fact that a large share of resources and attention are focused on academic training and vocational placement without an understanding of the importance of "non-credentialed" competencies, such as personal and social skills, or the development of confidence and connections that comes through meeting youths' needs for structure, relationships, membership, independence, and opportunities to contribute.

Youth development is a laudable goal, but how does it translate into policy soundbites? Ultimately, discussions of policy and practice get played out in the multiple arenas that capture and direct public funds -- education, employment training, health, juvenile justice, social services, mental health, income supports, housing. But policy decisions can and should support a larger vision defined by specific goals, clear principles and desired outcomes. That vision is youth development. And the connection between that vision and youth policy can best be understood by turning to the three major themes that emerged from the essays submitted for this publication: *promoting development, reforming systems and building supportive communities.*

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

Promoting youth development is a fundamentally different goal than "fixing problems" and the related, but still distinct, goal of preventing problems. The difference between these goals can be seen by considering the four themes that provide the overarching framework for this collection of essays -- *prevention, promotion, preparation,* and *productivity.* These were the themes the editors asked each essay author to address and that appear more or less explicitly throughout the collection.

These four themes may be defined as follows:

Prevention refers to efforts targeted at the reduction or elimination of outcomes that are harmful to young people and to society.

Promotion refers to efforts specifically designed to bring about clearly defined positive outcomes, or designed to foster the development of skills and competencies in young people.

Productivity refers to the effectiveness of a particular substantive service

area in achieving desired outcomes and the effectiveness of systems that are involved in working toward those outcomes.

Preparation is the broadest of these four terms as it is a general measure cutting across the other three. How well prepared youths are in areas such as work, family, and citizenship depends to a large degree on the success of the promotion and prevention experiences they encounter as well as the efficiency and productivity of the various systems that shape their lives.

As goals, problem prevention and treatment focus on the elimination of negative youth outcomes or problems. Promoting youth development has a much different focus: the development of skills and competencies that youth will need to succeed as adults. Some argue that this distinction is unimportant, that it is simply a semantic difference in the minds of researchers and advocates but has no real impact on youths' lives. The fallacy of this argument is clear when one looks at what is needed to fully prepare our youth.

Preparation implies movement along a continuum from low skills to high skills, from little experience to great experience. In thinking about preparation, we usually use zero as a starting point, assuming that we are working with a blank slate. But in many cases there is severe damage to be undone. Preparing dropouts for gainful employment, for example, requires work to rebuild self-confidence, reestablish a personal commitment to learning, rebuild trust, and reshape attitudes and perceptions that were developed in response to prior failures.

Broadening the recognition that we need to have both youth development and problem prevention and treatment as goals is a major challenge. Overcoming that hurdle will uncover a potentially more challenging set of problems. Current public policy and service delivery systems are not designed to facilitate youth preparation. Rather, most existing systems for adolescents are focused on treatment and prevention. While many pots of federal and state funds are available to "fix" adolescents in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, or to prevent problems ranging from teenage pregnancy to substance abuse, little is available to provide positive development supports and opportunities for all youth. Our existing service systems can be seen as productive only if very narrow, deficit-focused definitions of their missions are used.

Further, to the limited extent that a sense of public responsibility for youth development has evolved, society has created separate human services bureaucratic systems from those whose mandate is treatment or prevention. That design is inefficient and ineffective. Institutions with a mandate to develop youth (primarily schools) have little to do with those with a mandate to prevent and treat problems (for example, juvenile justice and social services).

Preparation is a process that spans the entire range from "fixing" to developing. Our goal should be to move every young person steadily along the path to being fully prepared. It makes sense to create systems that have the capacity to facilitate the entire process.

REFORMING SYSTEMS

The call for "system reform" is a common theme within the essays in this publication and throughout the social policy field. These calls for change are usually driven by a number of concerns, including a desire for improved client outcomes, reduced costs, and greater accountability. What is often difficult to assess in these calls for system reform, however, is the theoretical framework that is to drive the desired change. Systems can become different without becoming better. While there are a few general concepts that seem like safe goals in system reform -- including reducing cost and increasing efficiency -- more fundamental change requires agreement on a set of values or principles to guide the process.

If the goal of system reform is to better serve adolescents and their families, a youth development/community capacity building model is the logical theory to drive that effort. As described above, it is this framework that strives to meet the needs of all youth and insure that they have the skills and capacities necessary to navigate successfully the transition to adulthood. A youth development approach is certainly consistent with targeted efforts to provide prevention and treatment services and supports to those who need them. Finally, such an approach relies on a strategy that is held to be essential by the authors contributing to these essays as well as the field in general -- strengthening youth and families by building communities whose institutions and individuals all support them.

Buying into the youth development approach has a number of implications. We cannot put off plans to "develop" youth until we have "fixed" them. We cannot assume that if we assist a young person in one area progress in her/his broader life will necessarily follow. We cannot assume that skills and competencies can be built without meeting essential human needs. Systems and institutions, even if they have a mandate to focus on a single area (e.g., academic competence), have to make a commitment, at a minimum, to do no harm in other areas. This notion -- that all systems, agencies, and organizations have a responsibility to do noharm to youth -- leads to a sense of shared accountability and brings definition to the goal of moving beyond risk management and pooling of resources.

Each system must look within itself to assess whether its practices, policies and programs support the concept of comprehensive youth development. In this way, each system or component can help youth move steadily along the road to preparation by, at a minimum, monitoring the extent to which it has an impact on the full array of developmental areas. Critical assessment through a youth development lens allows systems to analyze their resource deployment, eligibility criteria, staff training/credentialling requirements, and program foci and structures.

Using comprehensive youth development as a framework also leads directly to a belief in the importance of creating supportive communities. Children grow up in communities, not programs. Development is most strongly influenced by those with the most intensive, long-term contact with children and youth -- family, informal networks, community organizations, churches, synagogues, temples, mosques and schools. Development is not achieved only through services, but also through supports, networks and opportunities.

The logical conclusion, then, if youth development and community capacity

building are used as the theory to drive system change, is that systems cannot assume that integrated services are enough. Instead, they must assess how they can both contribute to community capacity building and serve as a resource to communities. These are not easy tasks. Systems must be pushed by policies that adequately comprehend what it means to build community capacity and what it takes to be a community resource.

Community capacity building means:

- building a community charter -- vision, goals, and a statement of commitment to youth development for all youth;
- building social capital -- community pride, cohesion, networks and supports;
- building economic and physical capital -- transportation, jobs, housing, and safe streets, etc;
- building human capital -- community human resources, such as employed and engaged adults;
- building basic services and structures -- schools, social services, and essential daily supports (e.g., grocery stores, banks, parks and recreation, and police).

Being a resource to community requires that a system or organization:

- Articulate its expertise and link it to community issues and needs. For example, schools should broaden the educational services offered to include English as a Second Language, adult literacy, and summer learning activities. Similarly, the juvenile justice system could broaden to offer community forums on violence and crime prevention, alternative models for dealing with youth offenders, and a knowledge base about predictors of youth violence and delinquency.
- Offer resources (e.g., knowledge, skills, staffing, facilities, funding, and access to leadership) to the community, perhaps by systematically moving expertise out of its system into others and into the broader community via community organizations, networks, and forums.
- Assess the way the system is currently defined vis-a-vis community capacity building and youth development and be prepared to discuss its limitations. For example, a juvenile justice system may see itself as a receptacle for the kids that it locks up and may feel "boxed in," unable to move the more creative and positive agendas in which it believes.

BUILDING SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Definitions of "supportive communities" vary enormously. While most nod approvingly when hearing the phrase -- "It takes an entire village to raise a child," there are numerous interpretations of what is meant by "village."

- Is it people who are connected and have a commitment to community? That definition leads to programs and policies that support neighborhood associations, community development corporations, and strengthened social networks.
- Is it people with resources who can act as mentors and models to children and youth? That definition leads to programs and policies that support everything from mentoring, to housing desegregation (racial and economic), to targeted employment (empowerment zones).
- Is it services and structures? That definition leads to a focus on neighborhood safety, zoning, neighborhood-based services, improved neighborhood schools, and economic development.

Youth development hinges on all these types of supports. The pertinent question is the composition of the needed mix. What are the critical thresholds below which things start to crumble? For example, at what point does neighborhood safety become such an issue that it begins to erode the functioning of neighborhood associations and social networks? At what point do poor neighborhood services, schools and housing drive away the people who are willing to act as mentors?

Regardless of the definition of community, most agree that creating supportive communities is key to improving the lives of youth. Jack Calhoun, Executive Director of the National Crime Prevention Council, stresses that much of the increase in negative youth outcomes in recent years can be attributed to changes in communities -- children today are much less likely to be growing up in supportive environments:

"The gaping hole for many of today's youth is a sense of place in the community and a stake in that community. The absence of such bonding strikes at the very heart of what it means to be a person, which is, in part, being beholden to others. It also strikes at the very heart of our political structure, for if teens do not view themselves as being subscribers to the social contract, they will see no sense in following it. It can mean that a bump in the hall or perceived slight can result in murder."

Robert Blum, Director of the Division of General Pediatrics & Adolescent Health at the University of Minnesota, also stresses the importance of connection with community. In advocating a proactive resiliency approach, Blum argues that "we need to turn our institutions into environments where caring and connectedness are the norms. Where teachers, for example, learn the skills of participatory education and where discipline is affirmative, not punitive. We need to concurrently support families, informal support networks and communities in identifying and supporting disenfranchised youths."

How is this done -- the creation of communities where youth feel supported and connected? A number of authors suggest possible strategies. Julie Glover, former Associate Director of The Door in New York City, argues for the creation of supportive communities within youth programs:

"While community and neighborhood development is clearly the ideal approach to creating the necessary social supports and positive learning environments for youth, the difficulties encountered in trying to create such social change often mean that youth do not experience the positive external social environment they need *at the time they need it*, for social change on a large scale takes time and the confluence of many resources. Thus, creating an operational positive community *within* youth programs is a more immediate and cost-effectiveway of responding to youths' multiple developmental needs."

Beyond building supportive programs, several authors argue, we need to become a

society in which there is "public recognition of, and a formal commitment to, the proposition that virtually all children need some public assistance in their development from infancy to adulthood." Cindy Brown, Director of the Resource Center on Educational Equity at the Council of Chief State School Officers, furthers this argument in calling for a major change in thinking:

"In order to ensure that all kids receive the needed assistance, we need a system that encompasses both the public and private sectors and provides more than just a safety net -- one that includes a variety of special supports and developmental opportunities that are open to all. This positive, holistic view of sustained interaction between families and public and publicly-supported institutions is fundamental if we are to free ourselves from our current system of fragmented, categorical programs of limited duration and constricted eligibility."

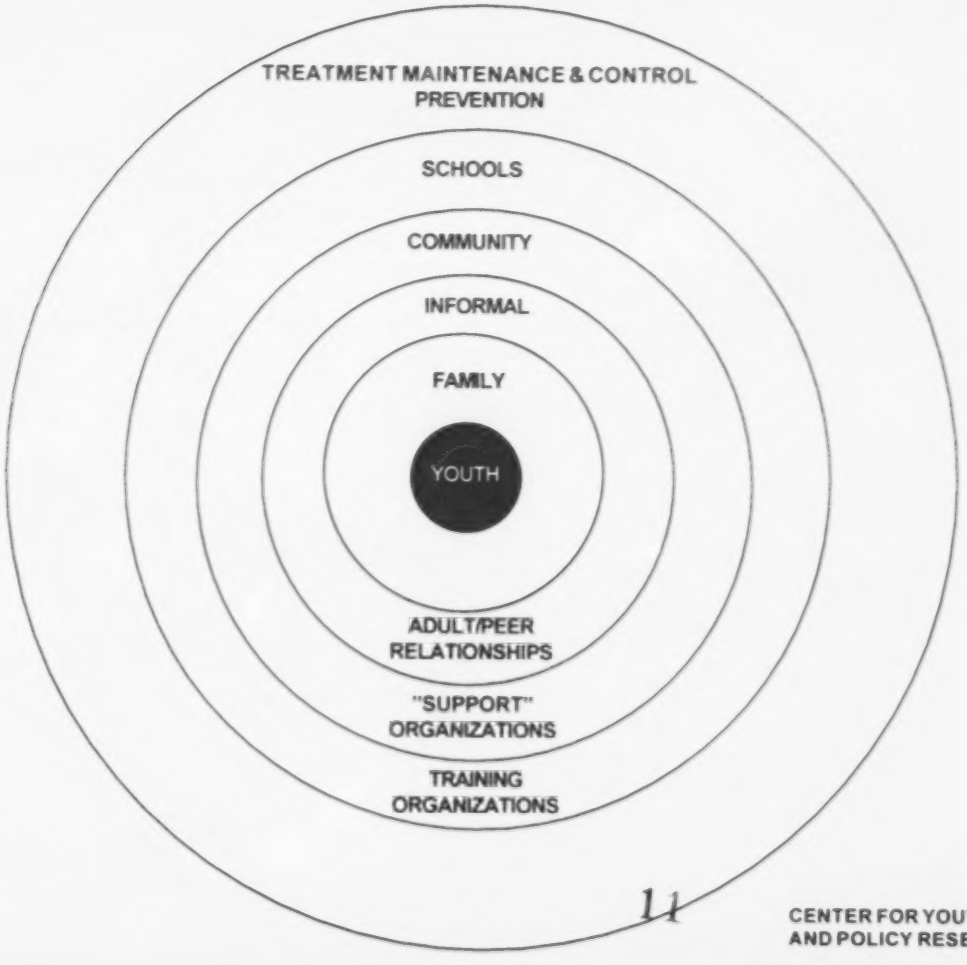
A final line of argument about the importance of communities relates more to the role of local involvement in the community change process than to communities as support. Hubert Guest, Deputy Executive Director of Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, argues that "current youth development strategies do not reach deep enough into the community to involve the resident community or the youth themselves directly in their own development and therefore fail to gain a real commitment over the long term." We will not be truly effective in bringing about change for youth until "neighborhoods do their own problem-solving, ... neighbors take responsibility for their own lives, and ... the public and private sectors foster these efforts in policy and funding..."

James Colley, Director of the Phoenix Parks, Recreation and Library Department, stresses that the federal and state governments need to insure that this local involvement is present from the beginning of any effort to address the needs of adolescents. "Too many federal youth programs are designed in a vacuum that excludes local community input and provides little interaction with the youths they are designed to serve, so they provide only superficial attention to the problem" that they are intended to address.

It is at the local level, these authors argue, that real change takes place. Larry Good, President of the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, makes this point succinctly in the context of a discussion of school-to-work transition:

"The community is where real life change occurs. We've come to believe that communities are places in which it is possible to connect parents, students, workers, employers and educators commonly in this agenda. And, we believe that communities offer an organizing mechanism for self-sustaining activity around workforce skills, in which all stakeholders (not just government) invest money and time in skill development and maintenance."

All of these perspectives lead to a youth-centered view of community supports that can best be described in relation to the diagram below.



Planners and policy makers often talk in terms of programs and interventions to address youth problems. But, again, young people do not grow up in programs. Indeed, many youth are never enrolled in programs and others spend only a few weeks in them. It is more accurate to say that youth grow up in, and are influenced by, the communities in which they live. Their most intense and intimate involvement is with family, then with a network of adults and peers with whom they interact informally in a range of community settings. Relationships, values, perceptions of opportunity, access and strategy are most deeply influenced by these people.

Thinking about *fixing youth* leads us to bring to the table the agencies, including social services, juvenile justice, child welfare, law enforcement, and health and mental health, that have treatment, safety, and maintenance as their primary mandate (the outer rings of the diagram). Those organizations and agencies in the outer circles play critical roles in the delivery of services to families and youth who need them. But, having been designed to deal with those in crisis, it is a constant strain for them to make problem prevention a priority. It is even more of a strain for them to develop the types of relationships with families, youth and communities that are needed for them to play a direct role in young people's development.

Thinking about youth development, however, leads us to the inner circles -- family, peer and adult friends and role-models. Community organizations and permanent community-based programs (for example, religious organizations, community centers, civic organizations, and settlement houses) can and should play a pivotal role as a bridge between the informal and formal institutional worlds.

But what about schools? Schools -- the single, publicly-funded institution which has a goal of serving all youth and a mission that centers on development rather than deficits -- parallel community organizations in their importance in youths' lives. Schools can provide the opportunities that support youth development. But, too often, schools rely on approaches that focus on the deficits, rather than the promise, young people have. Hence, schools rarely reach their potential and, in some cases, significantly hinder youth development.

Clearly, we need to strengthen families, social networks, and youth programs, and we need to improve schools. However, efforts to reach young people, especially efforts aimed at changing behavior, are most effective when they are made *through* rather than *around* these ecological layers. Prevention or intervention efforts that involve direct efforts to "inoculate" youth by the formal systems comprising the outer layers of the ecological model are not nearly as effective as those efforts that work through and with these relevant ecological layers.

These assertions, if accepted, have enormous implications for the prioritization of resources, for the concept of service integration, for the identification of lead organizations and change agents, and for the issues of staff training, professional development and the role of professionals and lay people in service delivery and behavior change.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Due to the work of youth advocacy and other organizations, like the Child Welfare League of America, the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services and others that comprise the National Collaboration for Youth, a comprehensive statement of national youth policy was recognized by the federal government when the "Claude Pepper Young Americans Act" (Title IX of Public Law 101-501) was passed in 1990. In its findings, Congress declared that:

"It is the joint and several responsibility of the Federal Government, each State, and the political subdivision of each State to assist children and youth to secure, to the maximum extent practical, equal opportunity to full and free access to

(A) the best possible physical and mental health;

(B) adequate and safe physical shelter;

(C) the highest quality of educational opportunity;

(D) effective training, apprenticeships, opportunities for community service, and productive employment and participation in decisions affecting their lives;

(E) a wide range of civic, cultural, and recreational activities that recognize young Americans as resources and promote self-esteem and a stake in the communities of such Americans; and

(F) comprehensive community services that are efficient, coordinated, readily available, and involve families of young individuals."

This statement, for the first time in one location within a federal statute, established positive goals for youth toward which the federal and state governments should aim. But it is difficult to move a national policy statement from lofty goals to implementation, as the failure of Congress to appropriate funds for the Young Americans Act testifies. Still, we can begin to picture how current youth policies and programs might change if viewed through this more positive lens. Youth development is the means by which to bring some underlying consistency to national policy.

FEDERAL POLICY FROM A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Youth development language and some of the policy themes articulated in these essays -- most notably the importance of federal resources to enable local communities to better serve youth -- are beginning to show up increasingly in federal legislation and federal policy debates. For example, in 1992, during the 102nd Congress, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act was amended to authorize states to fund programs for positive youth development that assist delinquent and other at-risk youth in obtaining:

"(i) a sense of safety and structure;

(ii) a sense of belonging and membership;

(iii) a sense of self-worth and social contribution;

(iv) a sense of independence and control over one's life;

(v) a sense of closeness in interpersonal relationships; and

(vi) a sense of competence and mastery including health and physical competence, personal and social competence, cognitive and creative competence, vocational competence, and citizenship competence, including ethics and participation."

Even more notably, during the 103rd Congress, the Youth Development Block Grant (S.1746 and H.R. 4086), a proposal to authorize $400 million in its first year to expand community-based youth development programs for 6-to-19 year-olds, was introduced in the House and Senate and was the subject of House Education and Labor Committee hearings. Using a comparison with the success and acceptance of Head Start, the bill argued that it "is critical that the Federal Government adopt the same type of comprehensive strategy in promoting the positive development of youth, and encourage and empower communities to develop and implement comprehensive youth development plans." The legislation will again be considered as the National Youth Development Community Block Grant during the 104th Congress (1995-96).

Likewise, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322) contains numerous provisions that authorize programs for youth. An "Ounce of Prevention Council" is created to make grants for summer and after-school education and recreation programs; mentoring, tutoring, and other programs involving role models; programs assisting and promoting employability and job placement; and prevention and treatment programs to reduce substance abuse, child abuse, and adolescent pregnancy. In addition, a Local Crime Prevention Block Grant Program was authorized providing several youth development options for funding, such as recreation programs partnered with education classes, grants for Boys and Girls Clubs to establish clubs in public housing, and mentoring. While substantial sums were authorized for this local government grant beginning in fiscal year 1996, its future is uncertain given the stated intention of some Republican leaders of Congress to eliminate social spending in the Violent Crime Control Act and redirect it to activities including prison construction.

The influence of youth development can be seen in other aspects of national and federal policy development. Prior to the passage of the Crime Control Act, an Interagency Working Group on Violence Prevention was created within the federal government, and one of the subgroups of this Working Group focused on youth development. The subgroup was comprised of representatives from the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice and Education. The group's goal was to use youth development principles and strategies to reform current approaches to youth violence prevention, both within and across federal agencies.

While the infusion of youth development concepts into the federal policy arena is a promising sign, the most critical battles lie ahead. Some opportunities -- such as passage of the Youth Development Block Grant -- are easy to identify. Others result from a much more welcoming environment within which the relevance of youth development principles can be demonstrated.

A CALL FOR ACTION

National policy recommendations designed to expand and strengthen youth development services, supports, and opportunities could undoubtedly be organized in a wide variety of ways. On the most basic level, a solid set of youth development policy recommendations would attempt to achieve the following:

- the strengthening of *national systems and federal programs* that affect youth;
- the strengthening of *community infrastructures*; and
- the establishment of *national youth development goals*.

What follows is the authors' attempt to provide a coherent, if not exhaustive, set of recommendations designed to achieve these three goals and, in turn, to improve the chances that all youth will have access to the positive development opportunities and supports they need in order to become healthy, productive adults. Whether in the form of original recommendations or the endorsement of recommendations made by other groups within the last year, we hope that this action plan will serve to advance the cause of youth development policy during the 104th Congress.

NATIONAL SYSTEMS & FEDERAL PROGRAMS

General Youth Development

"Parents have primary responsibility for the social, moral, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of their children. But tremendous social and demographic change during the last 30 years have had a significant effect on family life, creating a need for programs to support and strengthen families and help parents meet those needs.

In response, federal policy makers have focused most of their attention on early childhood development and college-bound students, leaving the developmental needs of school-age young people to the schools. But as a nation, we expect too much of our schools if we ask them to single-handedly provide excellent education to all students while, at the same time, meeting their developmental needs.

"It is critical that the federal government adopt a comprehensive strategy in promoting the positive development of youth and encourage and empower communities to develop and implement comprehensive plans to meet the growing needs of this often forgotten segment of our population."

-- National Collaboration for Youth

The authors strongly agree with this statement and support the National Collaboration's request to Congress to help communities become active in designing strategic plans for youth development. Among the essential elements of such plans recommended by the Collaboration are the promotion of increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the proven needs of youth and the definition of positive outcomes for youth that lead to self-sufficiency and self-reliance. In the words

of the Collaboration, the legislation should authorize "nonacademic programs that use active and experiential learning methods to help youth ages 6 to 19 develop social, moral, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies." Collaboration members believe that the focus for these efforts should be at the community level and build on the strength, credibility, and expertise of community-based organizations in delivering services. They urge the federal government to "recognize that nonformal, nonacademic, nonemployment experiences, opportunities, and skills provided through youth development programs are critical to success as an adult and necessary to the future of our society and country."

Employability, Education & Service

We also endorse the recommendations of the National Youth Employment Coalition in a recent report to the Department of Labor. The report, Toward a National Youth Development System -- How Can We Better Serve Youth At Risk, called for, among other things, a national youth development goal-setting process. According to the Coalition, a new national youth development system would need policy and program goals at all levels that are high, clear, measurable and attainable. To develop these national goals, the Coalition argues for the initiation of a broad-based national goals-setting process, modeled on the National Education Goals, focused on the importance of productive work, continuing education and responsible adulthood. The Coalition endorses the creation of a non-partisan, free-standing institution to lead the goal-setting effort. Once goals are established, this institution should be empowered to track progress toward these goals. A National Report Card would help policy makers focus on progress, practitioners focus on areas that need improvement, and young people focus on pathways to economic security and responsible adulthood.

We also endorse the Coalition's call for the development of a broad, national youth development strategy that includes:

- A multi-year investment in a young person's development that begins early, is age- and developmentally-appropriate, and individually tailored to specific needs;
- Workforce preparation and training to encourage long-term attachment to the labor force;
- Education that provides opportunities to apply higher-order academic and critical thinking skills to real life situations;
- Higher education to equip our young people for a fast-changing and increasingly competitive world economy;
- Options and choices for young people to move through multiple jobs and developmental experiences over time;
- Individual development plans that respond to assessed needs and goals of youth;
- Opportunities for young people to interact with both peers and adults in work situations;
- Community supports to help youth become productive workers and responsible citizens, today and tomorrow; and
- Accountability mechanisms that also promote a professional development support strategy.

Finally, the five authors see national and community service as an integral part of efforts to improve the employability and education of young people. We therefore recommend:

- An increased investment in opportunities for service and service-learning for young people, recognizing that the lessons young people learn in performing community service -- problem-solving, teamwork, responsibility, reliability -- are the same traits that employers desire in their employees. Service-learning in the classroom and the community also reinforces the idea that education is not just about academic attainment, or preparing to earn a living, but also about creating contributing members of society who are committed to addressing our society's most pressing problems.

Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare & Problem Prevention

The federal government should enhance the ability of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems to meet the needs of youth and their families, and strengthen local problem prevention efforts, by doing the following:

- Increase efforts to integrate crime prevention strategies and youth development programs through the Ounce of Prevention Council created by the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 and through other appropriate vehicles;
- Mandate priority access to all federally-funded youth-serving organizations and programs for young people involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems;
- Expand efforts to integrate the youth development approach in pre-service training programs in colleges and graduate schools that train professionals and paraprofessionals to work with youth and their families, including schools of social work, education, physical education, recreation, child care and youth work;
- Provide funding for the development of effective models of in-service training that integrate youth workers from a variety of work settings (e.g., youth employment, child welfare and juvenile justice);
- Strengthen efforts to insure that all recipients of funding under the Juvenile Justice Act are currently complying with the three goals of the Act: removal of juveniles from adult jails; the institutionalization of status offenders; and eliminating overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURES

For the most part, our recommendations focus on systems and the federal government's ability to put in place structures and programs to assist the development of young people. As

mentioned earlier, one of the major themes in the commissioned essays is the claim that real solutions to meeting youths' developmental needs are mostly created and implemented at the local level. Thus, the federal government needs to play a more proactive role in facilitating this process at the local level. Specifically, the federal government should:

- Reduce the local barriers to the use of federal funds and the implementation of federal programs related to youth development. Increase local efficiency by enabling communities to blend funding streams, establishing uniform reporting requirements, and developing other mechanisms for enhancing local action.

- Provide funds directly to local organizations that provide supports and opportunities, thus allowing local communities to legitimately pay for youth development with federal funds, rather than having to provide youth development opportunities under the guise of prevention or treatment. This funding could be coordinated through the Ounce of Prevention Council created by the Crime Control Act of 1994, or through a mechanism created by a future National Youth Development Block Grant or similar vehicle.

- Play a proactive role in fostering the development of local community schools that serve as comprehensive youth, family and community development centers. The Beacons in New York City provide an effective model of how a school that truly "belongs" to the community can become a rallying point for community development,. The federal government should provide sufficient funding and technical assistance to demonstrate and replicate this concept on a broad scale.

NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The challenge for those in the youth policy field -- in fact for all Americans, since we all share responsibility for our children -- is to initiate a process leading to the creation of national youth development goals. Such a process has been critical in the education field, in clarifying definitions and priorities, defining relevant measurable outcomes, and setting up a national accountability structure. Before we can move forward in an intelligent and intentional way in putting in place broader policies to insure that youth have adequate opportunities to meet their needs and develop competencies, we must be clear on where we are going and the best strategies for getting there. In many ways, this youth development goal-setting process should have preceded the education process; how can one system most effectively chart a course for the future without an understanding of the broader context within which it operates?

The primary objective of a process to develop youth development goals will be to articulate the positive outcomes that we want for our youth, to specify methods for measuring these outcomes, and to uncover the most promising practices and approaches for attaining these outcomes. Special attention will have to be paid to the settings within which youth are served and influenced. While some lessons may be equally applicable to community-based recreation centers and state juvenile detention centers, for example, others may play out quite differently depending on the setting.

Development of national youth development goals will not be an easy task. Nor will it solve all of the problems and challenges facing our youth today. What it will do, however, is provide a context for understanding the broad array of youth developmental needs and the competencies needed to make a successful transition to adulthood. And while a comprehensive youth policy may be years in the making, these goals could at least ensure that individual policies accord with what we know is best for our youth and their families.

While it is difficult to anticipate the course of a national debate on youth development goals, or the final shape that a such a list of goals might take, the issues that should form the core of the debate are clear. While the following list may be most relevant to a discussion of youth development goals, the topics should also be useful in guiding discussion and planning within the previous two categories of recommendations -- national systems and federal programs and community infrastructures.

Outcomes. Development of a list of youth development outcomes and goals will require a multi-step approach. First, we will need to acknowledge the legitimacy for policy purposes of the type of broad, positive outcomes referred to in the National Youth Development Community Block Grant. Next, we need to arrive at a definitive list around which consensus can be generated. The next step is likely to be the most difficult: How can we make broad developmental skills and competencies -- often viewed as too "soft" or "fluffy" to be incorporated within public policy frameworks -- concrete and clear enough to be defined and measured? The challenge at this point will be to devise mechanisms for carrying out this measurement process. Finally, what goals should all of those working with and for youth strive to attain in order to achieve these desired outcomes?

Benchmarks. The articulation of achievable and measurable benchmarks will be critical to the acceptance of a new set of positive youth development outcomes. While a shift to positive outcomes is a very important step, it must be acknowledged that outcomes are in many ways similar to goals -- they represent aspirations that could take many years to realize. If not accompanied by benchmarks to mark progress along the way, a set of positive outcomes could prove an ineffective vehicle for measuring the success of youth development efforts at the national or local level. But what are the benchmarks that can most accurately reflect progress toward positive youth development goals? Should a set of established benchmarks be used to create a list of positive outcomes, or should the process work in reverse? Should such a list be bound by current data sources and methods of information collection? And who should be charged with the responsibility of monitoring these measures?

Principles. A central tenet of youth development is a belief that work with youth should be guided by a set of principles. Examples of such principles include: it is much more respectful of youth, and in the end more effective, to focus on positive skills and competencies to be promoted rather than negative youth

outcomes to be prevented; and youth must be involved or adequately represented in all decisions that affect them and their futures. Consideration of principles should include the following questions. Should a set of common principles guide the work of all who work with youth? If so, what is the complete list of principles? Should they vary by setting, or by population of youth? How can these principles be operationalized so that their implications for policy and practice are clear? Finally, should federal and state policies mandate compliance with these principles?

Governance. Youth development has numerous implications for the ways in which schools, community-based organizations, public institutions, and communities should be governed. For example, a sincere belief in both a youth- and family-centered approach and the value of youth involvement in decision-making suggests a different model of governance than that currently employed by most institutions. What is the complete list of implications of a youth development approach for organizational governance? What models currently exist to demonstrate these values? Should the federal and state governments facilitate changes in governance, particularly in organizations and institutions funded primarily at the local level?

Financing. A youth development approach suggests bringing an end to the current highly categorical, problem-focused federal youth policy strategy. What are the best ways to achieve that goal? What are the implications of such changes for financing?

Systems Integration/Reform. Efforts at reforming systems, primarily through service integration, are underway in many states and cities. Applying youth development theory to these efforts points to a weakness in most of them. If they are driven by any theoretical framework or set of beliefs at all, it is generally little more than the notion that integrated services are more efficient, easier to access and, therefore, better. But without a stronger theoretical foundation, there is little to ensure that the new systems will better serve children and families in fundamentally different ways. Debate on this topic should focus on the ways in which youth development concepts can be used to create systems more effectively designed for and by children, youth and families.

Staff Development. Fundamental changes in the way in which youth services, supports, and opportunities are designed and implemented will bring about new staff development needs for all youth workers. These new needs should be considered in the context of a wholly inadequate system for training youth workers of all kinds. Questions to be addressed include: Is it possible and desirable to create either a national system of, or national guidelines for, staff development for all youth workers? What are the core competencies that all youth workers should possess? How can the public sector ensure that all youth workers are adequately trained to carry out their work?

Community Capacity Building. Improving the lives of youths and their families requires going beyond designing effective programs to creating healthy communities. Much more work needs to be done, however, in defining what a "healthy community" is and in fleshing out strategies for creating such communities.

Evaluation/Accountability. Finally, since youth development suggests a fundamentally different approach, it must be accompanied by new mechanisms for evaluation and a recognition that we are all accountable for the healthy development of our youth. Regarding evaluation, new methods must be devised to measure positive youth outcomes and to capture the various influences that all of the players in a youth's life can have. And if youth development implies a collective responsibility for all youth, how can we create an accountability system that will hold all sectors of a community accountable, while at the same time recognizing the unique responsibilities of various systems and segments of the population?

In a recent report of its Task Force on Public School Governance, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) also called for a national youth development goal-setting process. The Task Force had been charged with making recommendations for strengthening the governance of public schools to insure that all students have an opportunity to achieve a high quality education. Among its recommendations are the establishment of: 1) national children and youth development goals to transcend the funding and jurisdictional hurdles that prevent effective delivery of needed services; and 2) corollary goals to the National Education Goals to foster productive relationships among the various levels of education governance. The report calls for explicit, measurable substantive goals based on the developmental needs of children and youth. It also calls for the development of outlines for service provider working agreements that focus on client needs rather than organizational boundaries.

The authors of this essay support the approach called for by NSBA. With more specificity, however, we make the following recommendation:

By the year 2000, a Contract with America's Youth -- a set of specific youth development goals -- must be in place. Beginning immediately, a broad-based group must be convened to initiate this process, including youth advocates and service providers, governors, federal, state, and local legislators and other elected officials, private philanthropists, researchers and, most importantly, youth. The initial process employed by the nation's governors in Charlottesville, that ultimately led to the National Education Goals, could be a model. The ultimate goal of this process should be the development of a set of positive youth development outcome measures, benchmarks to measure progress along the way, strategies for making progress toward these goals and, ultimately, the design of a national system to ensure that all youth are regularly making advances toward the attainment of these goals. All of the issues and policy "handles" described above (i.e., principles, governance, staff development) must be addressed through this process. The newly created Ounce of Prevention Council would be a logical agency to take the lead on such a goal-setting process. If the White House fails to provide sufficient leadership, however, the private philanthropic community must step forward to insure that the process is initiated and completed, so that the goals will be in place by the year 2000.

Enhancing Resilience: Toward a New Model of Adolescent Health

Robert W. Blum

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a unique developmental stage distinct from both childhood and adulthood. Not only is it a transitional period, it is a stage of life with special vulnerabilities and health concerns. While we tend to focus our resources on public health problems such as juvenile violence, sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS, substance abuse and precocious parenthood, youth are faced with a much wider set of health risks. Six percent have a chronic or disabling condition that limit their activities of daily living. One in six will experience significant depression with nearly 15% of teenagers attempting to kill themselves at least once during their adolescent years. This is also the age group with the most rapidly escalating levels of poverty in America.

Equally important to the problems facing youth is the reality that adolescence is a time of opportunity. It is the stage of life when many health habits are being formed — habits concerning tobacco use, alcohol use, nutrition and exercise are but a few examples that can lead to severe and costly health problems if health promoting habits are not instilled early. Likewise, stress management, conflict resolution and assertiveness training, while not ostensibly health concerns, rapidly become so when we look at the litany of morbidity and mortality that stem from our failure to address those issues: depression, chronic pain, suicide, homicide, intentional injuries, child abuse, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are but a few.

THE NATURE OF RISK

We know that not all young people are at equal risk for negative outcomes. Research has repeatedly shown that when compared with peers, children exposed to the following are at increased risk of negative outcomes:

- parental mental illness
- parental divorce/single parent
- poverty
- chronic or disabling condition
- intellectual impairment
- abusive or alcoholic family environment

Within this context "negative outcomes" include: early childbearing, school dropout, delinquency and long-term welfare dependency (Schorr, 1987). Yet when we use the term "increased risk" we need to keep in mind that we are talking about a statistical concept. For example, we say that a child reared in an alcoholic family is at fourfold risk of becoming alcoholic than peers; that means that while 25% of children reared in such environments will go on to be alcoholic, 75% will not (Hawkins, 1993).

To me it is not surprising that those reared in crummy environments are prone to poor outcomes. The central question is why do some (and often the majority) go on to live healthy, productive lives? We need a new way to look at young people reared in adversity based less on pathology and more on competency to understand the answers and to build programs that reinforce competence.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH RESILIENCE

Personality Traits: Repeatedly, studies have shown that there are certain personality traits that help young people to overcome negative social environments. Many of these traits are in evidence in very young children: they are described as "cute," "easy to get along with," "cuddly." Older children are described as "verbal," "looks me in the eye," "inquisitive." Clearly those who are most vulnerable are those who by disability, disease or desire are visually unappealing; those who lack engaging social skills and those with expressive and receptive language problems. While certain personality traits are innate, others can be learned and still others can be modified to be less handicapping for the individual young person.

Family Traits: Family factors associated with improved outcomes for young people reared in adversity include:

- fewer children
- spacing of at least 2 years between children
- at least one caring adult
- a stable family environment

While it is optimal if the caring adult is a parent, it is clear that it need not be. Werner's research (1993) has shown that it may be a teacher, a minister, a relative, a youth worker, but a caring adult is a critical element. Likewise, stability does not depend on a dual parent family. It does not even depend on the availability of a biological family; rather, it depends on an environment that is supportive of achievements yet where the rules of behavior are clear and consistent. Finally, chores are the non-verbal way a family says to an individual that he/she is needed -- that they have something to contribute.

Skills and Values: Values associated with resilience include a belief system that allows the young person to make meaning of his or her life situation while coming to believe that he/she has the capacity to "overcome the odds." Such young people have realistic life and educational goals as well as an understanding of what is necessary to realize those goals.

Other Factors Associated with Resilience: Other key factors associated with resilience include at least one close friend and an informal support network — friends, school, youth groups, community, church, extended family, neighbors. In settings where children are seen as "ours," they flourish. Where children are viewed as "theirs," (e.g., their parents') the informal caring network is limited.

RESILIENT CHILDREN AS ADULTS

A number of studies have followed resilient children reared in adversity over time and have found that as adults these young people are indeed more successful than their non-resilient peers in "overcoming the odds." They have:

- higher educational achievement
- lower unemployment
- higher paying jobs
- better relationships with siblings

Resilient young people are clearly able to function better in society and less likely to repeat the negative social environment that they experience as children than are their less resilient peers. In truth, however, they are no more likely to be happy. Crummy environments leave their scars, especially emotional ones.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

To enhance resilience we need to move beyond our understanding that poor environments increase risk to an understanding that it is possible to enhance resilience. We know enough about risk and protective factors to intervene early before behaviors stabilize. If we know that school failure is highly correlated with every high risk health behavior from cigarette smoking to precocious parenthood, why wait? If we know that poor social skills increase a young person's vulnerability to negative outcomes, why wait? We know that risk and protective factors are not uniquely linked with specific negative outcomes; rather, both risk and protective factors cluster. If you can reduce any single risk factor you can improve the outcome for young people. It is important to remember that exposure to risk does not condemn a young person to the behavior.

But if preventive strategies are not built upon moral precepts neither can they be built upon fear. Rather, one of the central preconditions for behavior change is connectedness, what Hawkins (1993) calls "bonding." Every drug dealer knows the three steps to bonding:

1. active involvement
2. developmentally appropriate tasks
3. reward for achievement

Hawkins (1993) gives an example from the street corner society when a drug dealer approaches a 10 year-old: "Jimmy come here. See that house across the street — the white one three doors from the corner? If you can take this package across the street, count three doors down and ring the doorbell twice, some guy is going to come to the door and all you have to do is hand him this package. You come back here and I'll give you 10 dollars."

The 10 year-old is actively involved in the process. He is being asked to do something that developmentally he can achieve; and he will be rewarded for his achievement. And we wonder how young people become drug runners?

To accomplish a resiliency-based prevention model, we need to turn our institutions into environments where caring and connectedness are the norms. Where teachers, for example, learn the skills of participatory education and where discipline is affirmative, not punitive. We need to concurrently support families, informal support networks and communities in identifying and supporting disenfranchised youths. We need to support efforts that pair those at greatest risk — those without an identified caring adult — with someone in the community with whom the youngperson can bond. We need to realize that poor school performance in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades will result in pregnancy, violence and substance abuse four years later.

Children are not born with a sense of futility; they learn it from experience. To say nothing can work is a myth. We have 20 years of demonstration programs that have taught us what works for vulnerable youth. While we focus on the costs such interventions may incur if applied in wide-ranging programs, we tend to ignore the human and economic costs of our current inaction. What is bewildering is that in the face of knowing what works we choose not to do it.

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Getting Smart: The Social Construction of Intelligence

Jeff Howard

Recently, we have seen the first stirrings of a national debate about the common school practice of tracking or ability grouping -- sorting children into different academic programs on the basis of assessments of their intelligence. Tracking is so widespread -- it is a standard procedure in 85 percent of our public schools -- and it has been in practice for so long, that we have come to take it for granted as part of the "way things are." But policies that involve basic questions of equity and national competitiveness should be critically examined, not taken for granted. The academic programs provided in American schools for those considered average or below average in intelligence are in no way equal to what we provide for those designated "gifted." We are engaged in the strange and self-defeating practice of providing an "education" to children deemed less able that will simply not prepare them for the demands of the 21st Century economy.

There has been little discussion of the assumptions about people and their intelligence that underlie this policy. Ability grouping is based on a set of powerful, pervasive ideas in American culture about the distribution of intelligence and its relationship to learning capacity. They may be summarized:

- Intelligence is an innate, fixed characteristic of human beings.
- There is a distribution of intelligence within what is considered the "normal" human population; some individuals are highly intelligent, some are moderately intelligent, and some are not very bright.
- We can specify how much intelligence is needed to learn particular skills and concepts in school and to fulfill particular vocational or professional functions in adult life.
- We can employ standardized tests or the appraisals of classroom teachers to assess the intelligence of children. Ability group placements matching intellectual demands of curricula to judgments about the intelligence of the child are made on the basis of these assessments.

These beliefs constitute the central operating principles in American education. At the core of much of our educational policy, and the practice of tracking in particular, is the idea that intelligence is an unequally distributed, *fixed* endowment, dictating a rigid upper limit to each person's educability. Once we judge a student's intelligence, we feel confident in deciding what level of education is appropriate for him or her; those who score high are directed to the "gifted" track. Those we deem less able are placed in the "general" or vocational tracks, where they are given rote instruction, often by the most inexperienced of teachers.

Advocates of the extreme "fixed endowment" position, led by a coterie of psychologists and assessment specialists, have prevailed in the educational policy debate -- as reflected in the dominance of the testing/tracking paradigm in our schools. Despite the scientific pretensions, the ideas about innate ability and its relation to educability at the core of this approach can never be more than speculation. They are based on standardized tests (whose validity is hotly debated) and correlational statistical methods that, at best, allow for inferences of a causal relationship between measured intelligence and actual intellectual performance.

There is a self-fulfilling character to this speculation that has helped it achieve the highest level of acceptance that speculation ever can: it has become an educational convention -- an agreement that "this is what we will believe and act upon in our schools." The practice of relegating children considered less able to non-academic tracks has produced legions of young Americans who are intellectually underdeveloped.

The negative social impact of treating large numbers of people this way, including high rates of unemployment and anti-social behavior, as well as the apparent intractability and high visibility of this growing population (a large percentage of which is minority) powerfully reinforces the idea of innate differences in the minds of the rest of us. The frightening results of our own policies strengthen the stranglehold of the idea of innate, fixed differences on conventional wisdom. It is a truly vicious cycle.

To break out of it, and produce a generation that can hold its own, we need a new framework for thinking about children and their education. Why shouldn't we regard the intellect as a muscle, subject to growing strength and flexibility through exercise? If most Japanese are smart enough to learn higher mathematics, won't we build a better future by acting on the assumption that American children are, too? People may not be born with the same talents, in the same measure, but it is reasonable -- and prudent -- for us to assume that the great majority of our children are endowed *enough* to achieve verbal and mathematical competence. We must stop treating children as if they are forever limited by judgments about their intelligence made by fallible adults, and teach them instead that they can "get smart" through committed effort and strategy.

Our children live in a technological age and operate in an international economy; we must develop an educational philosophy that provides a basis for believing in their intelligence and managing their development. In a new educational approach, the most important single factor controlling the learning capacity of children will be a characteristic of adults: the ability to view intellectual development as a process that we have the power to manage. Taking responsibility for the development of children depends on willfully breaking the link, in our own

minds, between a child's learning capacity and crude measures of intelligence.

A new framework for thinking about education will include a major emphasis on the psychology of teaching and learning, in addition to the traditional focus on transferring the content of specific subject material. It will redirect attention from the current preoccupation with sorting children, and shift primary interest to the challenge of building a basis for teaching them. Virtually all of our children can learn higher mathematics, critical thinking and problem solving skills, and develop the capacity to write cogent essays -- *if* the educational process is effectively organized and managed by adults who believe that all children can learn at the highest levels.

The transformation is not likely to be entirely peaceful. There are important, entrenched interests committed to the old approach: educators who, in good faith, have built their classroom practices on accepted ideas about intelligence and learning capacity, and who may view critiques of these practices as an attack upon the very meaning of their careers; educated adults who are the "winners" in the old system, whose self-concepts are grounded in membership in an exclusive club of the "very smart" elite and who may, perhaps less than consciously, resist the democratization of intelligence; the testing and assessment establishment, the producers of standardized tests and expertise in a system based on the notion of an unequal distribution of intelligence, who have a direct economic and professional stake in its continuation; and the parents of "very smart" kids, who have cultivated skills in negotiating the present system to the great advantage of their children, and who may be reluctant to see that advantage neutralized or watered down by extending the fruits of a rigorous education to all.

In the contention that is likely to accompany change, we must stay focused on broader national interest and on the implications of this struggle on the quality of lives that all of our young people must lead. There will be no losers in an effective system built on the presumption that all of our children are intellectually capable. Far from watering down the excellent education we presently offer to a narrow segment of our population, a system aimed at teaching all, and holding itself accountable to do so, will unleash the intelligence of educators to find new, effective pedagogical techniques that will benefit everyone. We are all in the same boat, and we simply cannot afford for a large segment of the American population to remain underdeveloped. In the world we are creating, it is immoral to deprive any of our children of the knowledge and skills they need to prosper in it.

Ultimately, it is the ranking of societies, not children, that will determine the quality of our lives. The most important criterion for the international sorting process we are living through is no longer military prowess or natural resource reserves, and it is certainly not scores on standardized tests. It is the degree to which a society learns to develop its children that will determine its place in the 21st Century. The ideas that structure the present system of American education are clearly interfering with our capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to our children. Matters will only improve when we organize a broad constituency for change, based on an optimistic assessment of our children's capabilities.

The will to restructure our education system, and the courage to invest in it, are contingent on the belief that our kids will prove equal to the considerable and unpredictable demands of their time. Learning to believe that they can learn, and that we can learn to teach them, will require an act of faith, in children and in ourselves. It is a faith that will restore our confidence in the future.

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Devising a National Youth Development Strategy

Cynthia G. Brown

The most important characteristic about youth development in the United States is that we are not doing it! In the 1980s, when the wealthiest quintile of Americans gained dramatically in income, the earnings of young workers -- the "youth developed" during that period -- declined substantially after accounting for inflation. Young men's earnings particularly suffered with an overall drop of almost 20% from 1979 to 1989. This occurred despite progress in high-school completion rates and school achievement outcomes, especially for minority youngsters. The repercussions of the earnings drop for family formation have been devastating, with a parallel decline in marriage among young adults and a rise in the proportion of births to unwed young women.

Our public institutions, primarily schools, did not prepare these youth for a path of growth and independence. Nor did the private sector receive and assist them in the workplace. Why did this happen? Many scholars have offered explanations ranging from the structure of the American economy, to a complacency about preparing youth when relatively well-prepared adult women were flooding into jobs, to a failure to cope with an increasingly diverse population and willingness to let subtle and insidious racial and ethnic discrimination flourish. Whatever the explanation, if not reversed, the results bode ill for our nation's future.

Simultaneous with the drop in indicators of successful youth preparation for adult living has been the growth in the proportion of children living in poverty. Support for the positive growth and development of low-income children is our greatest national challenge and a mission not yet publicly embraced. As a nation we provide a conglomeration of publicly financed, but disconnected programs of prevention, intervention and recovery. Their glaring gaps and conflicting purposes make the notion of systems of services that are developmental, broadly based and inclusive (e.g., health, social service, juvenile justice) very far from reality. Only one such system, education, is universal. But we tolerate such a range of school quality that our educational system is universally recognized as inequitable.

So what can be done to promote a national commitment to the development of children and youth with special attention to those living in low-income families?

First, we must have public recognition of and a formal commitment to the proposition that virtually all children need some public assistance in their development from infancy to adulthood. This help may range from instruction and counseling by public school teachers and staff, to after-school recreational activities with tax-exempt nonprofit Boys and Girls Clubs or community youth choirs, to multiple interventions for families in crisis over most of the developmental periods of their children.

In order to ensure that all kids receive the needed assistance, we need a system that encompasses both the public and private sectors and provides more than just a safety net -- one that includes a variety of special supports and developmental opportunities that are open to all. This positive, holistic view of sustained interaction between families and public and publicly supported institutions is fundamental if we are to free ourselves from our current system of fragmented, categorical programs of limited duration and constricted eligibility. It is also a necessary first step if we as an American society are ever to enlist our public institutions as partners in a true social covenant with high expectations of quality in service to all. In such a society, all families may choose to use a service, be it after-school care or runaway shelters for children of the relatively affluent, or Head Start, summer recreation programs, and a variety of other supports for children and families in poverty.

Most European nations have embraced and implemented extensively, if not perfectly, such a social contract with their citizens and even immigrant residents. Americans, on the other hand, seem to overvalue our heritage of individualism and self-sufficiency. We are only slowly and with a sense of bewilderment coming to realize that our lives are interrelated and that we must take a measure of responsibility for one another if we are to maintain a high standard of living. (Ironically, the Western-oriented curriculum of American classrooms has failed to teach much about the more than century-old social systems of our European forbearers!)

Fully implementing the system envisioned above would take tax-generated resources that are totally unfeasible politically today or in the near future. But even though many youth-serving agencies are underfunded, extra resources alone for the public and private agencies and organizations now delivering prevention and intervention services would do little sustained good. In order for additional resources to be effectively used in support of the development of children and youth, there must first be a coherent, national youth development policy and accompanying substantial reform of the systems of service in their vertical operations as well as their horizontal interrelationships.

With the exception of elementary and secondary education, public service delivery systems in the United States are focused primarily on children and families living in poverty or disadvantaged in some other way (e.g., disability). Though developed over many decades, each system finds itself responding to a dazzling set of changed circumstances over the past 25 years, including:

- the dramatic increase in mothers of young children who work full time or are in education and training programs and, consequently, need quality care and developmental support for their children outside the home 8-10 hours a day, year-round;
- the tremendous growth in the number of federally funded, but separate

programs to meet specific needs of children and their families, each with exquisitely detailed -- but different -- criteria for participation;

- the assumption of some direct state responsibility for supportive services for disadvantaged children and families, and substantial development of state government capacity to administer a large set of both state and federal programs;

- new understanding from research and experience that for many children in poverty, interventions cannot be successful unless the family unit is the focus; that several kinds of interventions are often necessary and must be provided in a simultaneous and coordinated way to achieve positive outcomes; that because children learn most of their literacy skills and knowledge away from early childhood centers and schools, parents must help their children learn and engage them in learning and related developmental activities in the community and home, and that this experiential or "informal" learning should be linked to what happens in school;

- unintended consequences from our successes and failures in succeeding decades, e.g., open housing victories that allowed African-Americans and other minorities to move out of decaying inner city neighborhoods only to leave a very needy group of citizens behind to fend for themselves; and continuation of a de facto dual system of education nationwide that has produced utterly unprepared young people for a worldwide economy demanding higher skilled people.

Despite widespread despair about growth in child poverty and numbers of families in crisis simultaneous with public service cutbacks, there is cause for some hope. All the major systems of services -- social, health, education, justice, housing and community development -- are in the midst of major reform efforts. While each is organized differently and some are more decentralized than others, most have state agencies that have assumed major administrative responsibilities over the past two decades. Reforms in each system have several common elements:

- a renewed focus on the clients -- children and families -- and a new effort to view them holistically and developmentally;

- the identification of desired client outcomes and indicators of progress towards those outcomes;

- the establishment of accountability systems that measure client progress, rather than numbers served, and hold employees at all levels responsible for client improvement;

- expansion and/or initiation of new prevention services in addition to intervention efforts;

- more serious attention to organizational capacity building, particularly improved training for front-line workers;

- decentralization of decision-making about the nature of appropriate services;

- greater involvement of clients and their community in the program design and operation of local service providers, including schools, in return for assumption of greater family responsibility;

- fundamental redesign of the state role from being hyper-regulatory about inputs to a) providing in-depth, on-site assistance to service providers and b) monitoring outputs and only those inputs essential to program quality;

- better alignment of all programs for which a system is responsible around common goals, standards and desired client outcomes, including initiatives to combine funds from several sources to provide coordinated, mutually supportive services;

- efforts to link formally in new and unprecedented ways with the systems/sectors external to it.

An example of a major systemic reform effort on behalf of adolescent youth is the MiddleGrade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI) of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Drawing from the discussion and recommendations of Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century, the 1989 report of the Carnegie Council on Adolescence, its purpose is to stimulate systemic middle grade reform through changes in state policies, practices and funding that will enhance local capacity to implement the report's recommendations. Key recommendations include a high-level core curriculum for all students, closer student-teacher relationships, appropriately prepared teachers, integration of health and human services and health education as a core element of the middle grade program, partnerships with community organizations, and meaningful parent involvement.

The school will be a particularly important player in the reform efforts of all systems because of its sustained contact with young people and its relatively stable funding. Efforts by schools to systematically reassess their contribution to the development of a broad range of skills by youth are a critical piece of a national youth development policy.

However, this type of systemic approach needs to be applied across systems if we are to develop a coherent national policy supporting youth development. Each system must agree upon the positive outcomes desired, and change their policies and practices accordingly.

Finally, where does the federal government fit into the youth development agenda? Regrettably, while it invests millions, it is as much a problem as a help. Despite rhetoric about linking Perkins Act vocational education programs, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), JOBS, secondary-level special education and Title I programs, juvenile justice programs, and new youth apprenticeship and other school-to-career initiatives, there is little evidence of such connections.

Indeed, the greatest barriers to state and local coordination of programs are federal statutes that prevent or inhibit cooperative initiatives through stringent eligibility, accountability, and program design requirements. These rigid requirements are usually enacted to limit costs. But the extensive paperwork, duplication

of services simultaneous with service gaps, sequencing in the identification and delivery of highly categorical services, low priority on prevention services and negligible attention to positive development cause costs to burgeon rather than decline.

It makes no sense to try to design the ideal system from scratch. Instead, policy wonks and practitioners need to undertake the much more difficult task of reorienting the present service delivery systems and reordering existing resources to support youth development. This will entail figuring out in detail and recommending step-by-step how to align the major federal categorical service programs and make their walls more porous. There must be provisions for combining funds from several programs as long as the rights to participation and quality service are guaranteed to the historically targeted clients of each program.

A reoriented federal system might not provide the lion's share of resources. However, stable funding and coherent federal policy could leverage more efficient use of state and local resources.

Devising a national youth development strategy is a difficult undertaking. We owe it to the desired success of all our futures to move on this expeditiously.

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Claiming Our Children

John A. Calhoun

The father of a murdered son would not be consoled. His friend insisted, "You did everything right. It wasn't your fault. You fathered him. You made sure he believed in education. You sent him to college. You did everything you could." "No I didn't," the grieving father responded. "I took care of my son, but I didn't pay any attention to the other kids."

Webster's definition of policy -- "A definite course or method of action selected to guide and determine present and future decisions" -- captures neither the poignancy nor the potency of the father's awakened concern for "other kids."

As I write this paper, I read *The Washington Post*: "Five slain in District in 18 hours," a small headline in the Metro section; and "Youth Opens Fire at Shaw Music Hall." Why? Because he (a 16 year-old boy) ". . . grew angry at another patron for bumping into him on the dance floor."

What the hell is going on? Our august policy discussions identify issues - teen pregnancy, child abuse, violence, dropping out of school. They miss the very heart of the problem -- the aloneness, the isolation, the awesome disconnection of youth from that which makes a society work: family, school, community, job and a sense of future. The gaping hole for many of today's youth is a sense of place in the community and a stake in that community.

The absence of such bonding strikes at the very heart of what it means to be a person, which is, in part, being beholden to others. It also strikes at the very heart of our political structure, for if teens do not view themselves as being subscribers to the social contract, they will see no sense in following it. It can mean that a bump in the hall or perceived slight results in murder.

We're in a mess. Since 1960 there has been a 560% increase in violent crime, more than a 400% increase in illegitimate births, a quadrupling of divorce rates, a tripling of the percentage of children living in single-parent homes, and more than a 200% increase in the teenage suicide rate.

One way out of the mess is to avoid viewing the policies of compassion as antithetical to policies that affix responsibility, and ask for something in return. In 1986, I appeared in Congress, testifying on "Violence, Youth and a Way Out." The chair, Representative George Miller (D-CA) and the ranking minority Member, Representative Dan Coats (R-IN — now Senator) were both in attendance. I launched into an outline of what I considered to be requisite state and federal policies, e.g., a beefed-up Head Start, tough child support policies, child abuse intervention, economic development and job creation to help compensate for jobs lost in the manufacturing sector, health care and others. Miller nodded vigorously in assent and Dan Coats politely (I think because I had helped coach his son in Little League) tried to stay awake; clearly he had heard it all before and was not very interested.

I then shifted and began to speak of policies that would empower communities and engage youth as resources, asserting that society pays scant attention to teens

until they cross the line to pathology, when various "systems" intervene to fix or control. I pointed out that little attention is paid to teens' thirst for commitment, their high idealism and their inexhaustible energy. I spoke of our fledgling Youth as Resources (YAR) project in which kids identify social issues about which they are concerned, craft a project, argue for it before a funding board made up of youth and adults, and if they get it funded, run it.

As I described citizenship and obligation, George Miller leaned back wondering what planet I had been transported to, and Dan Coats leaned forward, nodding eagerly in agreement. At the end of my testimony and the questions, neither shook my hand. I had fallen between paradigmatic stools! Both are men of incredible good will and are well-intentioned, but were polarized in their search for solutions.

This was the conclusion to my testimony:

In the early '60s, I worked with youth in an impoverished section of Philadelphia. One block stood out as a beacon, mainly because of Mrs. Thomas and Mr. Collins. They worried over and knew every child on their block. Mr. Collins, sitting in a broken lawn chair with a whistle around his neck, would speak to every child -- "Why is your braid untied? . . . Where's your history book? . . . How'd you do in your math exam?" And if trouble arose with a teacher, parent, or sibling, there was always the sage and nurturing Mrs. Thomas. What would happen if Mr. Collins and Mrs. Thomas showed up today? Would they be welcomed or scorned, shot or applauded, chased out of the neighborhood or woven into its fabric?

The government must provide certain tools to enable its people to be fully functioning citizens, but the government cannot create citizens. The community, through its Mr. Collinses and Mrs. Thomases, must do that. The burden is on each of us. Unless we help our young people develop a sense of stake in their communities and their futures, there may be neither communities nor future.

Yes, structural issues abound and must be addressed: the economy; availability of guns; the disappearance of blue collar jobs; poor health and prenatal care; the need for expanded Head Start and earned income tax credits; poor housing; weak basic community institutions; crime and fear that can paralyze communities, rendering them citizenless; and class segregation.

But it is also the values of the dominant culture careening down to that most tenuous stratum of our society -- its youth -- and making it even more fragile: "Make my day . . . ;" the availability of guns and drugs; absent fathers; 14 year-old mothers. These values assault those who cannot buy -- or even see -- their way out.

My point is a simple one: We must operate on two tracks in preventing social disconnection. The first encompasses things that government must do. But the second means taking a new approach toward our nation's teens, in both program and process. The program focuses on providing youth with opportunities for responsible contribution, for serving -- they cry out to be needed, to be valued. The process focuses on the *dignity of the exchange* in which the individual's ability to contribute is acknowledged as an integral part of the individual's receipt of needed services.

We must communicate to all youth that they have something of worth that society needs and values. Would it not be possible, for example, to ask the delinquent to return something to victim or community; to ask of the teen mother whose new baby we assist and whom we are helping with her high school equivalency diploma to speak to 4th and 5th graders about what it means to be a teen mother? Our desire to "fix," which is critical, sometimes makes us forget that our client might be able to contribute something to others in need.

It can be done; Youth as Resources has proved it. The results are in and they are stunning: over 30,000 youth of all types have served, working out of hundreds of agencies, and there is not a social issue they have not addressed. They feel better about themselves, have greater empathy for others, find themselves fully committed to service, and use the gifts they have, applying these gifts towards issues they care about.

I ask only one thing -- that in addition to helping kids by providing services, we add a verb to the youth policy lexicon: "claim." That we start claiming kids, communicating that they are needed and needed now.

The grieving father was right: We all owe a debt of care to the "other kids." We are each their keeper.

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Mr. Calhoun served as the U.S. Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, the agency with jurisdiction over the government's policy for such programs and issues as child abuse, Head Start, child welfare, adoption, domestic violence and runaway youth. Subsequently, he served as vice president and director of public policy for the Child Welfare League of America, the nation's premier children's service alliance.

Youth Development: A Journey of Strength, Power and Love

Ellen Wahl

WHY A PARADIGM SHIFT?

I first heard about youth development as a formal concept from Karen Pittman and Ray O'Brien of the Center for Youth Development at AED. Was it reasonable, they asked, to recast the way we had been thinking about what young people need in this country? As well-intentioned as our prevention efforts were, they said, they amounted to viewing kids as collections of problems to be fixed. What about shifting our perspective so that we start from the premise that young people are capable, full of potential and deserving of support to tackle the business of growing up in a complex and often hostile society?

That made a lot of sense. After all, in our work at Girls Incorporated we ranted against approaches that blamed the victim, and believed strongly in the power of girls and young women. We had grown acutely aware of the dual nature of our work: while we intervene in girls' lives, we also advocate to change the system that perpetuates the inequities girls confront. Our approach to programming and the content of the programs was pure youth development -- building skills, knowledge and behaviors that would enable girls to take charge of their lives -- but many of the projects had been framed in terms of what we wanted girls to avoid.

At the same time, though, we worried that shifting to something so broad as "youth development" would lead to diffuseness. We knew from research and practice that it takes in-depth and targeted approaches to help young people stay on a healthy, productive path, and not get sidetracked by drugs, unsafe sex, too early pregnancy, or withdrawal from school.

We knew something about how to do this effectively and had about 20 years of experimentation with what works. In the 1970s, we thought that information would lead to revelation, which would result in changed attitudes and behaviors. In the 1980s, as the hopefulness of the '60s wore off (remember that the War on Poverty was going to eradicate the problem in ten years?), we proposed that young people needed a sense of the future, of "life options," in order to be positive about their actions. At about the same time, we recognized the power of peers and the "social influence" of the group in affecting what young people thought and did. We started paying more attention to the conditions surrounding young people in their homes, communities, schools and the larger society. And we realized that youth needed tools and skills, not just knowledge and positive attitudes, if they were going to make it to adulthood in one piece.

We found that none of these things worked in isolation, but that a combination could make a difference (Dryfoos, 1990; Falco, 1992; Girls Incorporated, 1991; Girls Incorporated, 1993; Nicholson & Postrado, 1993). We easily could have used all of these strategies with youth development rather than prevention as our framework. But the times were not conducive to that. The Reagan-Bush years were characterized by a punitive attitude toward young people, poor people, and people of color. Fear tactics and naive "Just Say No" campaigns were accompanied by massive cutbacks in social services. Restrictive policies about who could have access to reproductive health services, what those health services could include, and whether minors had any rights to confidentiality and protection made the picture grim for young people. The focus on prevention was an effective and subversive strategy for responding to pressing needs.

Partly as a consequence of those years, we face conditions in this country that would have been unimaginable 25 years ago. So, does it matter whether we call it prevention or promotion, whether we focus on problems or positive youth development? Yes. Viewing young people as strong and capable says that we value them. If we value them, then we're much more likely to invest resources and attention, to encourage their participation and power. If we see them as collections of problems, it's much easier to objectify them, demonize them or diminish them as helpless victims, and throw them away.

WHY DEVELOPMENT?

As youth organization leaders, teachers, curriculum and program designers, we have learned how essential it is to understand human development. The work we do is to support young people's growing up. If it's not "developmentally appropriate," it won't work, or it will be unnecessarily arduous and take much longer. It needs to capture the moment when a person is ready, so that it connects, engages, challenges, and makes joyful the process of learning and discovery.

Recognizing that socialization and discrimination have a profound effect on the way individuals develop is an essential part of any approach called youth development. This is a highly stratified society, and different groups have had different experiences, opportunities and treatment. Class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and language are real separators. If we want to make a difference in the lives of individual young people, then we have to pay attention to the barriers they have faced and the kind of fortification they need to make up for opportunities denied them.

For instance, with regard to gender, we know from research that while girls and boys are more alike than they are different in biology, attitudes and interests (Johnston Nicholson, 1991; Weiss, 1992), our society treats them as if they are separate species. If we are going to help girls grow up strong, smart and bold, then we have to be clear about how society has supported or thwarted their development. Girls Incorporated notes, for example, that 12-to-14 year-old girls are more vulnerable to mixed societal messages about appropri-

ate sexual behavior than are boys. Thus, girls are more likely to have their first sexual experience result from external pressure, are less likely to enjoy the experience and are less likely to admit, either to themselves or to others, that they are having sex -- an important first step toward seeking contraception and disease prevention (Girls Incorporated, 1993b, p. 103).

Each of those observations has implications for the content of programs, the methods of delivery, the training of staff, and the creation of an environment that encourages girls to tell and act on their own truths.

WHO ARE YOUTH?

A broad term, "youth" refers to a range of ages and stages depending on who is talking. For some, it is the end of middle childhood -- 8 or 9 years-old through early, middle and late adolescence -- 18 or so. For others, it refers to school age and for others goes back to early childhood. The imprecision about age is fairly benign. But the generic nature of the term permits unintentional exclusion of some groups and imputations about others. That in turn affects the nature of the policies and programs developed to support youth. So let me make some things explicit, and challenge us to be fully inclusive, aware and fair.

"Youth" includes girls and young women. Historically, the lion's share of resources and attention in youth programs has been dedicated to boys. Most programs are designed with boys' needs in mind. As a result, services for girls are often an add-on, inappropriate and stereotypical. Girls end up watching the boys play basketball, or get to participate in what organizations think girls like -- cheerleading and shopping activities -- neither of which is likely to build girls' skills as leaders, negotiators and shapers of their own futures.

Too often, we use "youth" as code for a list that sounds more like a litany -- inner city, poor, minority, and "at-risk." It is true that we are particularly concerned about young people from the places with the least resources, and we do want to make sure that they receive the support andservices they need. But separating them from other young people leads to a "them, not me" approach in which it is easy to fall back on the prescriptive, fixing approach that neither acknowledges their strengths nor allows them meaningful participation.

"Youth" includes gay and lesbian, not just heterosexual young people. Often isolated from their peers, subject to bias from the larger society, faced with a choice between concealing who they are and opening themselves up to ridicule and ostracism, homosexual young people deserve programs that do not assume heterosexuality as a given. We must go beyond responding to their needs only within the context of sexuality education and recognize how discrimination has been a factor in their growing up.

"Youth" includes persons with disabilities. Arguably the most invisible of all, young people with disabilities make up at least 10 percent of the youth population. Despite moves toward inclusion within the formal educational system, the record of out-of-school organizations in including young people with disabilities has been dismal.

WHERE DOES PREVENTION FIT IN?

Even within the youth development model, we are still trying to prevent bad things from happening to young people. It is simply not enough to have a safe place and a caring environment, a haven to protect young people from the pressures they face. There's a lot to know about how not to resort to violence, abuse drugs and alcohol, get pregnant, or contract a sexually transmitted disease.

So all of us in the youth development field need to have a complete repertoire of strategies that build skills, provide honest information, and offer the tools and resources that young people need to avoid the things that will derail and hurt them. It's one piece of the technical knowledge involved in positive youth development.

WHAT IS PREPARATION?

Preparation means helping young people acquire knowledge and savvy, skills and tools, and positive attitudes. It is both the perspective with which youth development approaches its job and a very specific body of knowledge about (a) the content of preparing young people for leadership and citizenship, lifelong learning, careers, health promotion and so on; and (b) the pedagogy and methodology of imparting the relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

This is the stuff of informal education, a systematic, rigorous approach to supporting the learning that takes place outside of school. The best informal education is at heart experiential and hands-on, driven by the questions of the learner. That kind of open-ended inquiry and reflection legitimizes youth's right to question and challenge. It gives substance to the philosophy of empowerment.

This approach is often the opposite of what most adults experienced when they were young, and it requires considerable skill along with commitment and patience to create an environment that takes full advantage of the informal, voluntary setting. Yet, the youth development approach can only succeed alongside a robust system of professional development, field-tested curricula based on principles of best practice, and an ongoing process of evaluation. All of these are today at the heart of discussions about the youth development field.

PREPARATION FOR WHAT?

In our daily work with individual young people, we often assume that with the right skill building and connections, any child can grow up to be whatever she or he chooses. Yet, when we step back and look at the tracking systems in schools and the stratified and segregated labor market, we see tension between high expectations for all and the reality of economic opportunity. If we put the contradiction to work in our strategies, we have a better chance of being effective. As we raise expectations among young people about their futures, we must also prepare them to be trailblazers, mediators, negotiators, and change agents. On a parallel track, adults have the responsibility to challenge the tracking and stratification, and that effort can be part of an organization's own strategy or the result of an alignment with others that have the capacity to undertake this level of policy and advocacy work.

WHAT ARE WE PROMOTING?

The mission statements of youth organizations are full of language about helping young people grow into responsible and confident adults. The outcomes need not be confined to the long-term future. We are talking about young people who today and tomorrow are able to think for themselves, to speak their minds and take action. We are trying to build a generation of people who are fair and just and peaceable, and a society that is fair and just and peaceable.

Dorothy Stoneman, the founder of the Youth Action and YouthBuild programs, reminds us that the most important component is love. And so youth development means making it possible for young people to love and be loved. The places we create must be full of love, not just to make up for what some may not have in their homes or schools or communities, but as a model for what human social organization can be.

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National Policy to Address the Youth Crisis?

James Colley

While a comprehensive youth strategy is not a federal government problem alone, the federal government must spearhead a national dialogue that will put in place a short- and long-term process and accompanying legislation to address the youth crisis.

The youth crisis may be the biggest problem facing the nation, yet unlike other issues with strong advocacy groups, youth issues do not garner the attention they deserve and require. A majority of our governmental leaders either fail to understand the gravity of the issues facing our youth or do not acknowledge that there are major problems.

The Clinton administration must give a very high priority to the development of a coherent national youth agenda, one that local governments, nonprofit agencies, businesses and communities can embrace and implement. It must be a collaborative effort to succeed.

This nation lacks a vision for our youths' future. Theories and research abound, but have never been developed into a national strategy. We have designed and funded various programs to address some alarming symptoms, but we have failed to initiate prevention and intervention programs that stop problems before they impact youths.

What do current federal programs do? They provide politicians with nice media sound bytes that acknowledge but do not solve the issues that put all of our nation's youth at risk.

And they fund self-serving agencies that waste valuable resources by addressing problems from skewed viewpoints. Their programs give these organizations clout in the community but do little to prevent the root problems confronting youths.

Too many federal youth programs are designed in a vacuum that excludes local input and provides little interaction with the youths they are designed to serve. Problems are pigeonholed and solutions applied nationwide instead of being massaged to meet local needs and perspectives.

Any federal legislation to help combat the youth crisis must provide fiscal resources and must hold local government responsible but provide local flexibility to manage programs that will effectively meet unique local youth issues.

Current federal youth programs are weighted heavily toward enforcement. These programs provide only short-term solutions. The problem, however, requires a bigger, two-phased attack, and the same effort and financial attention must be provided to both. The only truly effective long-term solution must be focused on local prevention and intervention programs planned by a broad spectrum of community alliances involving the educational system, private corporations, nonprofit organizations, local governmental agencies, and the youths themselves.

An even more creative and effective way to solve the problem is to intertwine prevention and intervention programs with enforcement elements to ensure maximum effectiveness in addressing youth issues.

Although the youth crisis is real and is felt throughout the nation, the problems are different from community to community due to population trends, ethnic orientation, and the outside influences at work on the young. Many federal programs force local governments to use funding in a predetermined manner whether or not the program serves a local need. Although the concept may be commendable, the programs tend to be fragmented. State and local governments know firsthand the major youth issues and can develop exciting programs to successfully address the youths' needs.

A program may deal with drug problems but never deal with the root problems that cause youths to turn to drugs. The summer youth employment program simply compiles statistics of participants, without any real direction or instructions to provide meaningful work experiences for the youth involved. These programs expend great amounts of money dealing only with the effect and not the cause. The summer youth employment program should be year-round and mandate career development opportunities as part of the job training.

Other programs, including many locally sponsored ones, place emphasis on the already overloaded criminal justice system. The criminal justice system must deal with the very real problem of delinquency and juvenile crime, but fails to focus adequate attention on prevention and intervention to solve problems. Indeed, the criminal justice system is not professionally trained to provide anything more than enforcement.

The cost to society of delinquency is high. Both on the national and local levels, sufficient funding must be made available for all the programs needed -- prevention, intervention, rehabilitation, and incarceration. If we continue to make a choice to fund enforcement programs exclusively, then we will continue to spend more money to serve fewer youths, and at a time when much of the damage in their lives is already done.

As a parks and recreation professional, I know the impact our programs have on young people. Recreation is often viewed as a fun-and-games frills program, but our programs show far more significant results.

Recreation programs provide a feeling of belonging, of knowing success and receiving recognition, of fairness, and of equality. The cost of recreation services is minimal on a per-participant basis compared to the cost of incarceration.

In Arizona, it costs at least $34,000 (and is increasing each year) to incarcerate one youth in a government-funded detention facility. It costs less than $19,000 a year to fund a 40 hour per week recreation leader to provide on-site programs to hundreds of participants. And those programs develop physical stamina, leadership and team-building skills, cultural sensitivity, self-confidence, self-esteem, and countless other characteristics, which will prevent later behavioral problems.

It may be impossible to define quantitatively the true success of a recreation prevention program. But when a prevention program is successful, youths do not become one of the distressing statistics: teen suicides, gang-related criminal activity, drive-by shootings, high school dropouts, teen pregnancy, and so on. Instead, youths involved in positive prevention programs become contributing members of society. We will never be able to place a number on the personal youth crises that are averted.

Some statistics hint at the success of recreation prevention programs. Funded by an $80,000 grant from the Arizona Supreme Court, late night and summer programs were offered throughout Phoenix at school gyms and in local recreation centers. The number of juvenile crime calls dropped from between nine percent to 70 percent in police precincts with these programs. That significant statistic proves that recreation prevention programs work.

Not only are these prevention and intervention programs a better and more economical use of taxpayers dollars, they also provide a healthy, safe environment for the child, with positive adult role models to help them build and maintain self-worth. This is far preferable to waiting until the child is in mental, emotional, social or physical distress, and the problem either requires an expensive correction or the warehousing of a child in an institution.

Our prevention efforts must be community-based. Leadership can come from a national source, but implementation must be the responsibility of local entities. Prevention does not deal with just the traditional youth-at-risk model. All youths have the potential to be at-risk. Prevention means programs for pre-schoolers, after-school and weekend programs for elementary school pupils, teen activities, and support for youths preparing for adulthood. This support develops skills for and provides an awareness of employment and educational opportunities, parenting techniques, and life skills.

Some prevention programs will specifically address our traditional "youth at-risk" groups -- gang members and wannabes, youths in poverty, abused children, the learning disadvantaged, and those lacking English proficiency. But we also need recreational and social programs for all teens, such as dances, sports leagues, classes. To be successful in this effort, we must plan with youth, giving them a sense of ownership of the program.

Only minimal additional federal funding may be required, because a reallocation of resources could balance programs in prevention/intervention and enforcement/incarceration. Every youth-related profession has a role to play in resolving the youth crisis. We need police officers, social workers, probation officers, and recreation professionals to come together to provide an array of programs to meet all youths' needs.

While I firmly believe that local implementation is essential for the most productive, efficient and economical approach, I see the need for a national task force to study and define the nation's youth agenda, support far-reaching coalitions, and serve as an advisory group to legislators and policy makers.

The task force's charge would be to develop a national youth strategy for the President's approval prior to submission to Congress. The task force should be convened for a one-year period, in which the members would receive input from across the country, through public hearings and solicitation of position papers from professional experts.

Task force membership should include representatives from all government levels, youth-serving community organizations, and the private sector, as well as a broad cross-sectional representation of our nation's youths. The youth task force should review and recommend appropriate changes to federal legislation, and reinforce the idea that prevention and intervention are key elements to the long-term solution.

The solution to our youth crisis requires careful national planning geared toward locally based youth programs with an emphasis on prevention and intervention strategies that work with law enforcement to curb the crisis now, before the future of our society is jeopardized.

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Promoting Youth Development in a Therapeutic Milieu

Julie Glover

Ideally, youth programs are designed around the psychosocial realities of adolescents. Service delivery must be guided by what we know about youth development and the conditions that nourish its healthy passage. Certain developmental tasks must be accomplished by adolescents in order to integrate their needs and potential with the social demands of their environment and culture. Circumstances which interfere with the completion of these important tasks -- such as heavy drug use, untimely pregnancy or serious legal problems -- can result in premature closure or "crystallization" of development, after which continued personal development is less intensive or attainable. Dealing with factors which retard the successful completion of developmental tasks during the teenage years is particularly cost-effective, since it can prevent a lifetime of difficulty.

Key adolescent developmental tasks include the formation of identity, the movement toward independence, the development of impulse control, the development of values, the development of ego competency and life skills, the establishment of the capacity for intimacy and commitment, and the attainment of formal operational thinking (the capacity to think hypothetically, to anticipate future events as consequences of one's behavior and to identify the logical implication of events). Mastery of each developmental task requires that youth have access to a variety of opportunities and experiences which allow them to make decisions. Regarding identity formation, for example, the adolescent must successfully confront the conflicts and opportunities of identification with a peer group, or fall prey to alienation and isolation. The adolescent must determine "who am I and with whom do I belong?" He scans the range of possibilities that exist within his social environment, and tries to assess himself in relation to available social groupings. A positive resolution of the challenge of group identity versus alienation is one in which the adolescent perceives an existing group which constructively meets his social needs and provides him with a sense of belonging. This sense of group belonging facilitates the psychological growth of the individual and serves as an integrating force in efforts to succeed in all of the developmental tasks of adolescence. As a member of a peer group, the adolescent has more influence than he would as a single individual, and thus the adolescent begins to understand the value of collective enterprise. In offering membership, the peer group expands the adolescent's feelings of self-worth and serves as a protection from loneliness. In complying with the norms of the peer group, the adolescent has an opportunity to state unambiguously that he is "someone" and that he belongs "somewhere."

No service system for adolescents should be considered complete or comprehensive without the intentional creation and maintenance of a milieu or social environment within which young people are helped to develop socialization and leadership skills without a particular focus on youth problems or pathology. In such a therapeutic milieu the environment is safe, nurturing and empowering, and services are provided in a natural context of "community life" within the program itself. Programs that intentionally build a community-oriented environment or therapeutic milieu communicate that each individual is valued and worthy of investment and support. Services are predicated upon a positive viewpoint of what programs should seek to achieve with young people, rather than the viewpoint of what young people lack.

Developing a therapeutic community within youth programs would be less important if teenagers had more positive community experiences outside the youth program setting. However, modern urban society has robbed people of many of the social supports that were formerly present, and it is the young who are hardest hit. Youth programs need to break the cycle of disconnectedness that so many youth suffer from today.

Communities, like families, shape young people's views of themselves and the world, influence their emotional and physical health, and serve as their base of educational, recreational and cultural activities. The course of an individual's adolescence depends in large part upon the strengths and weaknesses of his or her family and community. When either of these is fragmented, dysfunctional, under-resourced or dangerous, efforts must be made to stabilize and develop the community for the benefit of all inhabitants of a household, neighborhood or community. While community and neighborhood development is clearly the ideal approach to creating the necessary social supports and positive learning environments for youth, the difficulties encountered in trying to create such social change often mean that youth do not experience the positive external social environment they need at the time they need it, for social change on a large scale takes time and the confluence of many resources. Thus, creating an operational positive community within youth programs is an immediate and cost-effective way of responding to youths' multiple developmental needs.

In a strong community, adults play supportive parental roles for children who are not biologically their own. Caring individuals outside the family can fulfill youth's needs for adult support and role models. These adults often make the difference for a youth who might otherwise succumb to despair or aggression. Strong communities also offer youth safe places to "hang out" with their peers; recreational, cultural and educational activities; employment opportunities; law enforcement personnel who ensure justice as well as safety; and a sense of connection to other individuals that creates feelings of security, belonging and self-esteem. These same supports can be created within a youth center so as to provide participants with an immediate sense of human warmth, belonging and the support that is so necessary to healthy development during the adolescent period.

The day-to-day activities of a youth program's therapeutic milieu provide the participant with material for exploration, insight, feedback and experimentation with new modes of behavior and interaction. In the relatively controlled setting of a youth program, interactions with peers and staff can be used as opportunities for learning and growth. A consciously created

therapeutic milieu provides a corrective learning situation where positive interaction, constructive behavior, problem solving, self-expression, responsibility and independence are learned, encouraged and reinforced. Within this community, crises are seen as opportunities for learning and growth as youth learn about themselves and their relations with others; here, youths' needs for safety and belonging can be met, a precondition for the mastering of the developmental tasks listed above.

Youth join gangs in order to gain the kind of supportive community experience described above. Programs that are aware of youths' needs for affiliation and provide an environment where a sense of community can be experienced in wholesome and constructive ways will be addressing those developmental needs which are most germane to the acquisition of the behaviors and skills needed for adult success. In the words of one adolescent, "...I came into [this program] feeling I was a nobody, so I wasn't doing anything with my life I'm proud of. But the feeling of togetherness [in this program] has changed that for me. It's a homey feeling, it's like family I needed but never had. I want to take that feeling with me when I leave here. It helps me to be who I want to be."

In making staffing and programming decisions that foster a sense of sharing, community and belonging between youth and staff, programs must create an environment within which youth can begin to accept responsibility for their lives and explore options they may never have dreamed they had. The kinds of staffing, program and training decisions that enhance the creation and maintenance of a therapeutic community have been explored in other articles by this author; suffice it to say that the quality and impact of a youth program depends primarily on the quality and orientation of its staff.

Staff must be capable of creating and maintaining a sense of community among themselves for purposes of role modeling and to most effectively use the resources of the center on behalf of the program participants. To work together collaboratively, with open communication and trust and in a spirit of challenge and change, staff must be oriented through training and staff development. Staff must be willing to expand and change formal role definitions, must be genuinely and deeply committed to helping young people grow and change, and must be flexible enough to relate to youth outside of rigidly defined roles, defenses and images. At one successful youth center, for example, the psychiatrist and lawyer participate in general community-building activities with teens as a prelude to engaging the most hard-to-reach youth in much needed service provision.

In the provision of services, persistent efforts must be made to transcend traditional professional boundaries and redefine professional roles to facilitate staff members working as a team across disciplines to provide a comprehensive response to youths' multiple needs and potential. Professional and paraprofessional staff need to regard each other as equals sharing a common task. Only the staff can set the tone of trust and mutual respect intrinsic to an overall therapeutic environment. In such a milieu, young people are given opportunities to interact freely and constructively with all staff members in the program. All staff must be aware that adolescence is a fertile time for growth and that interactions with young people are opportunities for learning and change.

Training for staff in "milieu work" needs to be a program priority, since milieu group work enables a relatively small number of staff to be effective in constructively channeling the energies of relatively large groups of young people.*

A youth program needs to create an environment of security and safety by emphasizing relationships not only between staff and young people, but also those fostered among young people themselves. Use of security guards should be the last rather than the first line of defense, as in a therapeutic milieu all parties are considered responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, respectful, caring environment that promotes personal growth and change. Youth can be trained to function as peace enforcers in a variety of ways, and when incidents involving violence and aggression occur, the most therapeutic programs examine the event with staff and youth, challenging all parties to assume maximum responsibility for preventing such events in the future. In a therapeutic milieu, staff actively help young people to become aware of and to control negative behaviors, by specific feedback, role modeling, and the teaching of communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

A therapeutic milieu -- with its emphasis on environment, interactions and relationships -- provides young people with opportunities to practice problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution skills and to acquire a more varied repertoire for responding positively to situations of conflict and stress. Through interaction with staff and peers in an environment of mutual support and caring, youth are given a less charged and safer setting than the street in which to understand their own and others' feelings and actions. Ideally, young people will be involved in both developing and maintaining rules and resolving conflicts, acting like a "positive gang." It is through active participation and shouldering responsibility for one's immediate world that one learns how to participate effectively in a democracy and in community-building, both much needed skills for healthy adult functioning. Whenever possible, staff function in the role of advisor/helper rather than expert/doer, leaving responsibility for development in the hands of youth themselves.

Since youths' most basic human need is to belong, and since youth programs are being increasingly asked to meet this need in the absence of other societal institutions which can effectively address the issue, it is imperative that indicators be developed that allow for the measurement and tracking of environments, opportunities and relationships. Youth programs will need to use a multitude of strategies to provide young people with opportunities to bond, contribute and be rewarded, and to teach young people to care for themselves, their groups of affiliation and the wider community.

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* *Milieu work engages young people collectively, within the context of their functioning as a peer group, and raises their consciousness about the dynamics and issues being played out in their interactions. Dealing directly with and building upon peer group behavior as an active, conscious process enables staff to give effective direction to young people when they function within the group context, and encourages the development of constructive and overly expressed peer norms and values, which must be established if a youth center is going to depend on peer as well as staff governing of events.*

The Central Role of "Age" in Youth Development Policy

Andrew Hahn

The editors of this collection have admonished all the writers to follow three pieces of advice: be brief, be lively, and be frank. So here goes:

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Federal social policy does little to recognize the specific needs of America's "middle children" -- early adolescents ages 10 to 15 -- despite alarming evidence that they are adopting the risky, sometimes violent, behaviors of older teenagers at increasing rates. The startling statistics about at-risk youths, those most likely to become non-productive adults, are well known by those who follow social welfare and children's issues. But how those risk factors develop and spread among various age groups within the youth population is not common knowledge. A new publication from the Center for Human Resources at Brandeis University's Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies shows that early adolescents in the 10-to-15 year-old range are not well served by the present generation of public policies. *America's Middle Child: Making Age Count in the Development of a National Youth Policy* describes various indicators of well-being for children and youth, shows how these vary by age groups within the general youth population, and reviews what has been the federal policy response.

In our two-year review (conducted with support from the Lilly Endowment), we found that among 188 separate federal programs studied -- crossing at least a half dozen different agencies -- only two small programs explicitly target early adolescents. Few legislative provisions acknowledge the importance of age differences among youth. Most programs don't even specify which age groups they do serve.

America's Middle Child argues for a public policy (federal *and* state *and* local) that would address the distinct needs of different age groups within the youth population. With 16 million public school children enrolled in grades four through eight -- 38 percent of all elementary and secondary school children -- the potential for prevention is enormous. The conventional wisdom in the field of youth services is "early intervention," but most youth policy, family planning and life skills programming does not focus on early adolescents. Just as policy makers have embraced the argument that Head Start is necessary to place disadvantaged preschoolers on a level playing field by the time they reach primary school, our research shows that the problems of older youth -- teen pregnancy, gun violence, dropout rates, unemployment -- might be reduced by expanding service offerings in the late elementary and middle school years. To do this, policy makers at all levels of government will have to make *explicit* their expectations about the age groups served in public policies.

This hasn't happened at the federal level. It isn't likely to happen with current proposals for block grants which challenge the federal role in youth policy altogether. *Focusing on the untidiness of Federal youth initiatives -- or tossing them out in the trash -- without focusing on how these programs work for specific groups of children will create more problems than it solves.* State policy makers who presumably will inherit many of the responsibilities formerly held by the federal government would do well to think carefully about different age groups and the special opportunities for prevention that are available.

America's Middle Child is not naive about the reformulation of social policy underway in Washington. Our hope in releasing the study is that it might influence how people think in policy terms about youth development. If the concept of "youth development" is to have any integrity, it must stimulate new national, state, and local policies that are sensitive to the differences among young people of different ages.

We talked to youth advocates, program practitioners, policy makers, and grantmakers. Most had not thought about this simple point or had not thought through its implications. A few disagreed. Some thought that young adolescents are adequately served by today's generation of public policies. Others worried about "balkanizing" the youth population, pitting one age group against another. But we think that the report's conclusions about the hodgepodge of federal initiatives for youth, and the poor record of monitoring their effectiveness, should be of interest to both conservative and liberal camps. Both sides should welcome new strategies for improving the reach and impact of limited federal dollars available for American youth. But make no mistake: *America's Middle Child: Making Age Count in the Development of A National Youth Policy* supports the need for a vigorous federal role in American youth policy and shows that new funds, not merely a realignment of current funds or a refocusing of targeting provisions, will be necessary to serve more 10-to-15 year-olds where the potential for prevention is greatest.

WHY A FOCUS ON YOUNG TEENS NOW?

Evidence reported in the Lilly-supported "early adolescent policy audit" reveals that many social problems have been getting comparatively worse among early adolescents. The risk of living below the poverty line for 6-to-15 year-olds is higher than for youth 16-to-21 years-old. Some indicators, such as suicide, have shown a 75 percent growth among 10-to-14 year-olds between 1979 and 1988. The murder rate for this young age group rose 42 percent during the eighties. The average annual rate of handgun crime nationally (excluding murder and manslaughter) among 12-to-15 year-old African-American males has reached parity with the rate for white males, ages 16 to 19. The Centers for Disease Control in 1992 reported that 33 percent of 15 year-old girls have had intercourse, almost a 100 percent increase over 1980 and a 560 percent increase from 1970.

An "early adolescent reform strategy" stimulated by private foundations has urged that education and human service programs serve young people in ways that are appropriate to their ages. The Carnegie Corporation of New York, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Lilly Endowment, DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Ford Foundation, and others have worked with their grantees to ensure

that program practices are both age- and stage-appropriate. *However, reforms have not yet translated upward from direct service to policy, meaning that even improvements in service practice have been haphazard and short term.*

Voluntary youth-serving agencies, like Boys and Girls Clubs or YMCA/YWCAs, can play a significant role in the lives of 10-to-15 year-olds and poor minority youth living in areas of poverty. But the policy reports don't say how public policy should or could stimulate the growth and accessibility of these programs for early adolescents. We are told of middle schools that are being restructured. Yet, few Elementary and Secondary Education Act dollars actually go to middle-school age-youth.

The President proudly wears his CITY YEAR community service sweat shirt, yet we know little from a policy or research perspective about which age groups gain the most from community service. We talk about new and exciting apprenticeship programs and school-to-work initiatives to prepare America's young for "high performance" workplaces. But policy initiatives are silent on pre-apprenticeship and feeder mechanisms so that middle-school age youth can qualify for training programs characterized by high standards.

If problems are starting earlier in young peoples' lives, and if their needs are growing, if 10-to-15 year-olds enjoy participating in social programs and get a lot out of them, then the implications for new public policies and more explicit age targeting in general youth policies become nearly irresistible.

AGE TARGETING IN PUBLIC POLICY

Building on the emerging consensus that young adolescents, ages 10 to 15, comprise a distinct and identifiable group by virtue of biological and social maturation, we would like to see new national and local policies in support of this group.

Our review has found that effective learning strategies for young adolescents must incorporate what the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation calls the "3 Highs," namely, *high expectations from adult staff and planners, high program content, and high social service and family supports.* As others before us have found, there is "no one best approach." However, some models seem especially promising for promoting self-sufficiency among young teens, such as:

- prevention programs to delay "too early" childbearing;
- community service models for early adolescents;
- pre-apprenticeship schemes and mentoring programs to prepare middle school-age youth for secondary-school level vocational exploration, skill training, apprenticeship, and school-to-work or school-to-school transitions;
- higher education awareness programming that teaches children as early as fifth grade what college is all about, and what decisions have to be made even in junior high school to put oneself on the right "track;"
- anti-violence initiatives and suicide prevention;
- comprehensive programs that serve the needs of the "whole child." According to a recent Urban Institute report, most comprehensive programs serve older youth, not early adolescents in the 10-to-14 year-old range.

Some advocates call for Youth Development Block Grants to develop infrastructure at the local level and to better meet the needs of early adolescents. We envision a consolidated national blockgrant strategy, starting with early adolescents, ages 10 to 15, and continuing through age 19. Such a policy would encourage and nurture the preceding program approaches and would explicitly encourage appropriate services organized by age groups within the youth population.

America's Middle Child describes a prototype legislative proposal titled the "Healthy Futures for Youth Consolidation Act." It borrows freely from the Youth Development Block Grant Act being discussed by some in Congress, but we recommend a sharper focus on the distinct needs of early adolescents. We call for a Title 1 to be aimed at Early Adolescents, Title 2 for Older Youth and Title 3 for training and certification of Youth Development Workers. Title 1, the early adolescent "prevention" component, would be placed under the direction of large community and voluntary institutions, such as Boys/Girls Clubs, Scouts, and YMCA/YWCAs, as well as the many small grass-roots organizations that have pioneered special curricula or neighborhood-based initiatives. Title 1 would focus exclusively on young teens in the 10-to-15 year-old range. With special financial aid, community groups of all sizes would have the potential to reach many more poor youth in after-school and weekend programs than current practices allow. The service providers would have to demonstrate the capacity for serving young teens and the ability to reach youth generally regarded as "hard-to-serve." The self-sufficiency goals of the programs would be promoted through expanded higher education awareness initiatives, community service, entrepreneurship, mentoring, teenage suicide prevention, and anti-violence initiatives. Additional services would encourage recreation, participation in arts and culture, training in basic health and safety, inter-personal skill and leadership development, preparation for further education and training, and participation in a host of group identity and racial/ethnic education initiatives. The legislation would not prohibit nor promote any specific curricula, as long as the youth development goals of the programs were consistent with the authorizing legislation and every supported program promoted self-sufficiency for young teens and their families.

We are concerned that what's driving the current policy debate is the belief that the United States sponsors too many programs for young people, not whether the country has the right policies in place to serve all the children who need help. What we need to be focusing on is prevention, making sure that the growing web of social problems doesn't entangle any more of our children. And right now those most in need of help are early adolescents, the missing child in the portrait of our American social family. Let's put them back in the picture, let's find a place for them in public policy.

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A National Youth Agenda: Returning the Community Interest to the Community

Hubert E. Guest

The answer to developing a coherent youth development strategy relates to the "how, what and for whom" strategies of community development. Resolving issues that affect our communities, our families and our youth depends on the efforts of resident-led, community-based organizations. A youth-development strategy needs to be intertwined with the basic community development policy direction -- a melding of the community interest with the special interest. Resident-led, community-based nonprofit corporations supported by governmental structures are the basis for initiating change in the way we address community needs and the development of a coherent youth development agenda.

Such organizations are already developing strategies to meet the physical, social and economic development needs of communities. These organizations recognize that community organizing, comprehensive planning, and strategic investments of the public and private sectors are part of the mix needed to create solutions to community problems. They understand that, given an enabling environment that makes them responsible and provides resources, solutions can be achieved by the actions of those most directly affected. Those resources include access to the decision-making process and access to technical and financial mechanisms.

Over the last decade, nonprofit, resident-led, community-based organizations have become a permanent part of the landscape in urban, as well as rural, America. In the literature of the field, community development means the process by which the efforts of residents are united with those of government authorities and private-sector resources for the economic, social and cultural benefit of the community. This partnership approach is a proven one, thoroughly documented; such locally controlled nonprofit organizations are here to stay. The emergence and growth of national organizations designed to fund and support this network provide further evidence that the nonprofit sector has become an integral part of our community fabric.

In communities everywhere, large numbers of neighborhood people are meeting, planning, investing in their neighborhoods, empowering public officials, addressing neighborhood needs, and carrying out strategic actions. Residents are enrolling in leadership training and then providing leadership in the community. Why is this happening? Simply stated, people are beginning to see that the other models for providing community services are not getting the job done. Deliverers of services are doing exactly that -- delivering the service and then retreating to their homes and communities far away from those people served.

A study done by the Community Service Society in New York found that approximately $7,000 per person in public and private dollars is allocated to low-income people in New York City. Of this amount, the low-income person only receives 37 percent of the money. The rest is spent on services, provided by employees who most likely do not live in the low-income neighborhoods. In this scenario, too little money goes to the intended recipient, and too much exits the neighborhood with the service provider.

The legislative and programmatic agendas of current development strategies neglect the need for community. Reaction to this vacuum tends to come in two forms. The first one is intervention on the part of government agencies, special-interest groups, and public-interest organizations that attempt to affect government policy and its implementation. In the past 25 years, government has moved away from community service. Government and special interest groups have been less than able to organize a coherent response, integrate current programs, or rationalize investment in community life.

The second approach is one of self-help, wherein people or organizations pull themselves together to fill the vacuum created by the inability or unwillingness of government to provide or create the essential conditions of community life — housing, employment, education, public safety, and in some cases, civic responsibility.

For the last 20 years, professional service providers have used a deficiency model to define community needs and problems. City planners, social workers, public administrators, human service providers and federal officials define our neighborhoods, our cities, and our communities through their problems. They are young, they are poor, they are drop-outs, they lack marketable skills, they are pregnant, they are unemployed, they can't read, they come from broken families. Professionals see these as a series of problems or liabilities. Programs are then designed to treat each individual problem.

Whatever the problem, the solution is seen as outside intervention, utilizing professional service providers. Problems are viewed as being discrete, measurable and solvable -- by intervenors. Professional service providers counsel, train or rehabilitate, setting things straight for local citizens. If the providers succeed, a small group of people in the community will have been served. But nothing will have happened to the community; it doesn't grow, it doesn't change or move forward. And if the funding for these programs is cut off, the commitment to action ends.

But the problems are political and not individual. The problems can be corrected if set in a community context. The fact that "they can't read" is caused by an education system that no longer recognizes the community. That "they are unemployed" is caused by a system that is not creating jobs. A coherent community development strategy and/or youth-development strategy must recognize the political nature of the problem.

Current youth development strategies do not reach deep enough into the community to involve the resident community or the youth themselves directly in their own development and therefore fail to gain a real commitment over the long term. The institutional support systems available to youth have proven themselves to be ineffective in facilitating any real change in youth attitudes and concerns, because they respond primarily to the exhibited delinquent behavior of the individual youth. Further, these systems fail to help lift the community to a point of real change, growth or self-reliance.

At Neighborhood Reinvestment, we have learned from our network of NeighborWorks® organizations to reach deep into the communities in order to stabilize them and bring about a positive reinvestment strategy. In many programs, this means involving the youth of the neighborhood in the development and investment process.

Working with our partners, such as the Salt Lake City Neighborhood Housing Services and other NeighborWorks® organizations, we have developed a very effective youth intervention model that uses the following set of assumptions to construct a comprehensive program:

- The behavior of "at risk" youth has a negative effect on the image and quality of life in a neighborhood. Failure to intervene may result in more serious forms of delinquent behavior, which may cause further deterioration of the image and quality of life in the neighborhood.

- The patterns of behavior of neighborhood youth are similar regardless of social, ethnic and/or economic background. However, the lack of a support system and the extent of peer pressure on low-income and minority youth place them "at risk."

- Delinquent behavior is really an expression of lack of self-esteem. Appealing to and developing the strengths of the individuals provides them with the skills they need to monitor their own behavior.

- The youth in our neighborhoods are capable, intelligent and worthy individuals in need of role models who provide real and patient care for their individual development.

- Given the opportunity to develop real skills and to participate in meaningful work, youth will respond positively to the standards of personal and job-related excellence in community programs.

- An understanding of their heritage through history, cultural events and meaningful exchange with adults of like heritage is necessary to the development of self-esteem.

- Given the opportunity to explore their options for a viable future, youth are determined to make better choices in the present.

- A non-institutional, alternative, community-based youth program best addresses self-esteem. A youth program in a neighborhood setting enables youth to practice new skills in a real life context.

This model has demonstrated that youth problems in a neighborhood can be tackled by the neighborhood, if the neighborhood is given the responsibility and resources. A youth program using this model provides a sense of self-confidence in both the youth who participate and the neighborhood itself.

Neighborhood Reinvestment's community development strategy is to achieve reinvestment in communities through home ownership, home improvement and development of affordable housing -- but not to overlook other needs. Local NeighborWorks® organizations involve other community concerns such as youth development, economic development and employment and community organization.

Other approaches to community-based development have been just as successful in responding to community needs and concerns. The Lena Park Community Development Corporation of Boston has a 25 year history as a bottom-up alternative to the top-down delivery system. The corporation began in response to the rising housing needs in the Mattapan and Dorchester communities of Boston. However, it became clear that the housing issues were related to other community issues such as youth development, recreation and education.

As a result, in 1980 the corporation began to provide community services, including all of the youth in the community, not just those who exhibit delinquent behavior. This approach allows the community to have responsibility for the growth and development of the community as well as the development of responsible and healthy young people.

If we want to develop a coherent strategy that will make a fundamental difference, we must be willing to look past the current institutional support system. We cannot expect government to do it. We cannot expect neighborhoods to go it alone. We must jointly develop a strategy that reaches deep into the community, uncovers alternative neighborhood-based delivery systems, and includes the youth themselves in the development of the program.

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Thinking About Youth in Families and Communities

Kathleen Feely

In our country, families have traditionally been viewed as the most critical social unit responsible for youth development. Perhaps for the majority of kids, families still serve this function. However, public policies and public systems have demonstrated an increasing propensity to waver in their faith in families, particularly when it comes to families at risk of chronic unemployment, family violence, physical and mental health problems, and the like. These families are likely to be poor, minority, and the least well-served by our social institutions and policies, which tend to deal categorically with the problems faced by vulnerable families.

The same is true for the systems designed to address youth at risk of abuse, arrest, teenage pregnancy, or dropping out of school. Public policies and programs aimed at these youth assess, diagnose, treat, and label them, as individual representatives of categorical systems. They become youth of child welfare, juvenile justice, health and mental health, or special education. This approach has been abysmally unsuccessful. Yet, increasingly, the policy response to the failure has been to over-incarcerate, over-hospitalize, and over-place in residential care settings, all of which are very costly approaches and have the effect of isolating kids from their families and communities in order to "help" them.

Some policy makers have begun to question the wisdom and efficacy of residential placement as the treatment of choice. They have made some strides in understanding that policies and programs need to emphasize earlier intervention and more collaborative efforts among schools, communities, and the various categorical human service systems. But policy makers need to go further and reconceptualize children's services as a way of stimulating and sustaining family achievement.

Virtually all families have some strengths, and the state should not attempt to substitute for them. Our country's social welfare policies must be redesigned to have faith in families and to find ways to build on their strengths. Such a reconceptualization represents a shift in thinking, particularly around adolescents. There are no good alternatives to families; the best place for a child to grow up, especially a high-risk child, is in a family.

The next step is to think of these kids not only in the context of their families but also in the context of their communities and to focus on serving them there. Very little work has been done to think about the role of preserving the often vulnerable families of these at-risk adolescents in their communities.

The major contribution of family preservation services in the last decade is that they take the first step in changing how we conceptualize social services and focus on families. Family preservation services are short-term, intensive, crisis-intervention programs used when children are "at imminent risk" of being taken from their families. The approach is remarkably different from the traditional social welfare method of helping families. Caseworkers respond to the first call within 24 hours; there are no waiting lists. Staff work with only two or three families at a time, typically for just four to six weeks, and spend up to 20 hours a week with a family if necessary.

The work takes place in the family's home and neighborhood. Caseworkers meet with parents and children and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, because crises often happen outside of 9 to 5 schedules. Services can include help in fixing the plumbing or in teaching a parent how to set curfews. Family preservation programs are most commonly used in the child welfare system to keep children home and out of foster care, but are increasingly being adopted to keep children with their families instead of in mental health institutions or juvenile justice facilities.

Family preservation services are by definition preventive; the goal is to avoid out-of-home placement. The programs, however, promote the development of specific identifiable skills and competencies in families, in both youth and parents. They rely on working with the family and listening to and building upon the aspirations these families have for themselves and their children.

Thinking about youth in the context of their families and in the context of their communities poses challenges to our traditional ways of thinking. In the 1980s, I and others at the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice developed a family preservation program, called Family Ties, as an alternative to the incarceration of adjudicated delinquent youth. Many of our colleagues were extremely skeptical and said that it could not work. These were New York City's toughest teens and they were on their way to state facilities for delinquents. They were typically minority youth from poor families. They had often been born to teen parents and they lived in poor, drug-infested, violence-ridden, crumbling New York City neighborhoods. They were the children that the schools, and even social workers and human service systems, often give up on.

But the program did work because it focused on families. In one of our first cases, the primary skill that the very young, very overburdened mother needed to learn was how to say no when her adolescent child wanted to go out at 10 p.m. Teaching this mother basic parenting skills such as how to set limits, resolve conflict, influence behavior by using positive incentives, and make connections to community supports was all it took to keep a child out of a juvenile justice institution in upstate New York. This is not an isolated case. After three years of operation, the program has sustained approximately a 69 percent success rate and convinced the New York City Office of Management and Budget of its efficacy. It has expanded citywide and is publicly credited with saving 11 million dollars from early 1989 through the end of 1991.

Today's human service systems are chaotic and driven by chronic crisis. The

nation has been producing growing numbers of families who are at increased risk because of poverty, discrimination, growing numbers of single parent households, declining informal and extended family supports, and other factors. Public systems -- juvenile justice, children's health and mental health, protective services, foster care, work and income support, and education -- are failing at enormous and increasing public expense. In some jurisdictions, budget crises are leading to the illogical decision to gut preventive and diversionary programs to pay for the high cost of deep-end parts of the system. In the last few years, there has even been policy pressure to give up on families, or at least on many poor and disadvantaged families, and to build more orphanages, junior jails, mental institutions, and the like.

In the midst of this crisis in our human service systems, family preservation services are a counter example. They have demonstrated, in numerous states since the late 1980s, that services can be driven by achievable outcomes, judged in measurable ways, organized so that they are replicable, and financed without losing control of public expenditures.

In fact, the ability of family preservation services to avoid out-of-home placement costs has been credible enough that approximately 30 states have developed family preservation services with public funds. A growing number of these states have such services statewide. Some states, such as Iowa, Tennessee, and Missouri, have gone further and begun to experiment with decategorized, flexible funding across the various public human service systems. They have given more latitude to front-line workers to support vulnerable families according to plans developed jointly with the family instead of according to funding categories set rigidly by statute, regulation, and agency policy manuals.

Public policies need to support these efforts and reaffirm the commitment to families. Policies and programs need to empower families to realize their aspirations for their children's lives and their own. Legislators and executive branch officials should set public policies and allocate public resources in ways that reinforce the belief that families play the single most critical role in determining the future of all children. Public policies should not make so many exceptions to supporting families. They should not suggest in statute, regulation, or fiscal incentives that juvenile justice kids are too tough and adolescents are too hard and special needs kids are too complicated for families.

Nor should they suggest that some communities are lost. Families are parts of communities. It is sound public policy to focus on serving children in the context of their families and families in the context of their communities. Some communities are beset with unemployment, drug abuse, crime, and poverty, but the policy answer is to ensure that families receive services in these communities and that schools, social workers, health and mental health care professionals, and juvenile justice officials work with these families as parts of their communities.

To achieve the necessary reconceptualization, our policies and practices should fund services that are more preventive and comprehensive in their support of families and communities and should hesitate more than they currently do to make out-of-home placements in foster care, mental health institutions, and juvenile justice facilities. There will be the inevitable awful and sad cases where families do fail, but they will be fewer. More kids will have the opportunity that growing up in a family provides. And while some children will have to be removed from their homes, we will do it less often.

Family preservation as a movement and as a set of services shows us that this shift is possible. Family preservation is a model whose components have been replicated on a large enough scale to be meaningful. The services are targeted enough not to lose control of public finances. Family preservation serves as a counter example to the ever-present claims that nothing in the human service system works and that our most vulnerable families cannot succeed. We need to create other policies and programs that focus on supporting youth in their families and communities.

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Changing the Paradigm to Community Youth Development

Della M. Hughes
Nexus Nichols

Despite pockets of well-being, conditions for young people in this country are discouraging, even alarming. As a society, we bemoan the current circumstances and fan the growing hysteria about out-of-control teens. We constantly focus on the negative and then are surprised when youth descend to the level of our expectations.

To give concrete voice to a vision of healthy conditions for young people, the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services has embraced community youth development (CYD), a model that espouses "working in partnership with youth to strengthen or regain their ties to community -- whether that be family, neighborhood, school, or friends -- **and** working with communities to value and support youth."[1]

Community youth development starts with the premise that we all have the capacity to manage our lives in a constructive, productive manner and in positive relationship to ourselves and to each other. A strong value is placed on respect for the inherent capabilities and strengths of individuals and their ability to work together to shape their life situations and address the challenges they encounter. Individuals coming together to share their lives create community; hence, CYD posits that they have the ability to create nurturing alliances that are just and compassionate.[2]

William Lofquist, in *Discovering the Meaning of Prevention,* notes six assumptions about youth development and the prevention of youth problems. These assumptions are central to the CYD approach:

- Youth problems and their prevention are community problems and responsibilities, and both the contributing factors and the solutions are to be found in the community.
- As a community responsibility, the prevention of youth problems involves bringing about change in those conditions that contribute to youth problems.
- A balanced community approach to youth development includes both the provision of legitimate remedial services and an emphasis upon creating conditions that contribute to the well-being of young people.
- Changing community conditions that contribute to youth problems usually requires changes in organizations and institutions in the community. This requires a cooperative effort on the part of decision makers, human service professionals, youth and adult citizens.
- Community, organizational and institutional change requires a combination of useful concepts, purposeful strategies and effective leadership skills. These are shared by an expanding group of people who work together.
- Resources at the state and national levels can be supportive of the kind of community responsibility required for positive youth development. It is important that resources at those levels do not stand in the way and act as restraining forces, as they frequently do.[3]

Young people are usually left out of the dialogue about community. Youth are also viewed as persons who are not fully developed and who are going through a stage that will "thankfully" end in their twenties. More recently, with the increase in and devastating effects of youth-related violence, teenagers are seen as dangerous and frightening. Clearly, there are young people who are out of control. Equally clear, too many young people are fending for themselves as a result of "out of control" families, neighborhoods and ill-conceived social policies. Young people are bearing the brunt of our fear and unwillingness to collectively create a society that values and welcomes their participation.

Some are concerned that CYD is a "soft" approach that isn't designed for youth who are living on their own, who are violent, or who have been abused. CYD does not ignore problems, but they are no longer the only focus. Through CYD, which actively promotes conditions leading to the well-being of the community and individual youth, a number of social problems from juvenile delinquency to school dropout, homelessness, and teen pregnancy can be prevented. Youth in these situations will not be "lost," but have opportunities to be skilled, contributing members of our communities.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF YOUTH SERVICES

- **The United States must establish a strong national youth policy that sets the standard for our commitment to young people.**

The United States falls behind other countries in its handling of youth policy issues from education to health to social services to basic human rights. As a world leader and a country concerned about its present and future well-being, it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge the important role young people can play and to create conditions for their healthy development and transition to a productive adulthood. The Young Americans Act (Title IX, P.L. 101-501) attempted that feat, but has never gained the support and funding necessary to make it viable. Our country needs a strategic plan for youth that is backed up by dollars, not platitudes.

- **Youth programs and services, regardless of type and level of involvement, should incorporate a community youth development approach.**

Historically, spending has focused on social disasters, instead of looking to the root causes of problems and then preventing them. Prevention, intervention, and treatment are all essential. It is, however, crucial that a sound system of programs and services be put in place in every community to develop healthy young people, provide them with the skills and supports they need to negotiate life events and stresses, and serve as a safety net when crisis erupts.

CYD does not preclude prevention, intervention, or treatment; it encompasses these and much more. It creates a holistic framework requiring integrated values, knowledge, and skills that truly bring out the best in young people, families, and communities. Core CYD principles entail respect, partnership, safety, valuing diversity, cultural competence, mastery of practical skills, mutual self-help, mentoring, and relationship with others and the sacred.

- **Communities should "be creators and partners in the development of innovative youth services. Partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors [should] strive to create...community resources that ensure essential services."**[4]

While a national policy is needed to establish direction and standards, communities know their unique needs best. Community, here, is defined in its largest and most inclusive sense. Communities are not just local governments, public agencies, or the most influential organizations in the private and nonprofit sectors. They include youth, family members, and representatives of all those who touch young people's lives. Communities also include neighborhoods and subgroups who may have differing ideas about how to approach a particular issue.

A full range of programs and services are needed to give young people the best opportunity to be safe and lead healthy and productive lives. To place an emphasis on one component of the continuum to the exclusion of the others is shortsighted. No single organization can "do" everything, so efforts to work collaboratively with other agencies must be encouraged and supported. Federal and other funding should continue to reach "forgotten" groups. In addition, incentives for community-wide collaborations or for pooling a percentage of categorical dollars for collaborative efforts should be provided. This move would help facilitate more comprehensive and integrated services through active collaborations between public and private community-based organizations, businesses, and other community members.

- **Youth programs and services should be operated by community-based organizations with the ability to be flexible, responsive, innovative, and accessible.**

Bureaucratic entities cannot provide effective, direct services to youth consistently and in a manner that provides youth with individual attention or activities and services that are personally relevant. Organizations that provide easy access and can create safe space where young people feel secure, develop a sense of connectedness, and have their needs met are the clear choice. These organizations prize youth input and self-determination, innovation, and quality. Government has a clear role at all levels in establishing policy and standards, providing funding, and ensuring that programs are regularly monitored and evaluated.

- **Young people must be involved as full partners in the design, delivery, governance, monitoring and evaluation of youth programs.**

Young people want to make a difference. The challenge for adults, who traditionally control the resources and programs, is to join with youth in designing means through which they can channel their energies in a positive manner and make contributions that will not only create a better situation for others, but also aid in their own development.

Involvement of youth as partners is often treated casually and too often ends in failure. Just as organizations committed to excellence orient and train employees to take on new tasks and responsibilities, youth deserve the same respect and opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in new situations. Young people are resources, not just passive recipients of adult wisdom and experience. We need their insights and abilities to make our programs and communities stronger, and they need the guidance and support of adults. When that combination is taken seriously, there is no limit to the challenges that can be addressed

- **Youth workers should receive ongoing training that addresses development of the practical skills, core knowledge and attitudes required to be effective.**

The value our society places on youth workers mirrors our lack of commitment to youth. Youth workers, who are paid well below the standard for other occupations, are still struggling to understand whether youth work is a field or a component of other professions. The education and training of youth workers has often been constructed from work with adults and adapted without understanding the special characteristics and needs of adolescents. There are numerous opportunities readily available to make a significant impact on youth work. As a first step, the training and technical assistance offered to grantees of current federal programs could be refocused to incorporate a community youth development approach.

- **Funding for youth programs and services must be stable and adequate for their designed purposes. Additionally, funding must be a mix of public and private funding streams in order to keep agencies healthy and able to serve as a reliable resource.**

Decision makers need to recognize that youth programs must be stable and continuous. The seed funding concept works well for new ideas, but to require established programs to seek renewal or new funding sources every one to three years seriously undermines quality and continuity. The impact on youth and families of decisions like these is grossly underestimated. Youth who have been betrayed or forgotten by their families and communities are further disenfranchised

every time a program they trust stumbles or closes because of funding losses.

Block grants can certainly be one ingredient in the mix of funding but direct federal funding to community-based organizations helps them preserve their autonomy and ability to serve the best interests of youth and their families. As an alternative to block grants, funders can link categorical programs across departmental lines (e.g., health, human services, housing, and employment) in order to create more comprehensive programs and also create funds specifically for the purpose of integrating programs and services at the local level.

- **Funding for youth programs and services should be flexible and holistic, yet protect youth and families who are vulnerable or lack access.**

Categorical programs are established because existing programs do not and/or will not serve specific populations or needs, and there are simply insufficient programs to address the broad array of needs of young people. The creation of broader, more flexible guidelines for implementation of current government-funded youth programs is definitely needed, but to expect that this will adequately address the needs of special populations is unrealistic.

- **Funding for youth programs and services should include the development and maintenance of an infrastructure for accountability and sensitivity to changing community needs.**

As youth programs and services mature, requirements for data collection, management and evaluation are added and strengthened -- as they should be. Unfortunately, funding to provide staff time, technical training, and appropriate equipment and supplies is usually nonexistent or seriously insufficient. Program administrators are told they can divert funds to cover these other costs, so both youth and staff end up suffering.

The costs of collecting sound data, tracking youth who have received services, and evaluation are part and parcel of delivering quality services. For-profit companies would not consider waiving the overhead fee on a sustained basis, but nonprofits are frequently asked to do so, either fully or partially.

Furthermore, standardized data and reporting requirements must be developed across categories of similar programs, as much as possible. Horror stories abound in many community-based agencies implementing management information systems for federal, state, and local funding sources -- none of which are compatible. As thorny as the problem of integrating systems is, information generated can be valuable in detecting trends and emerging needs, as well as understanding program participants. Additionally, good evaluation and research that are disseminated can tell us what works and what is promising. Over time the cost savings make the investment worthwhile.

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Learning and Doing: A New Vision

Hilary Pennington

For too many young people today, school is an isolating and demoralizing experience that holds little apparent connection to their aspirations or their futures. The pathways from school to the world of work are obscure and difficult to access. In the past several years we have seen a growing consensus over the pressing need to forge better links between the worlds of work and school for the majority of young Americans. Such pathways have the potential to reduce the time young people spend floundering in dead end jobs in their twenties, to make learning more alive and relevant, to connect young people to helping adults, and to open new routes to success and further learning, other than the one route erroneously perceived to fit all — college.

Young people themselves express eloquently the need for better connections between school and work, learning and doing. As one student describes the nature of work-based, hands-on learning, "If your parents are trying to teach you to ride a bike, they don't give you a lecture and watch you take notes. You keep practicing until you do it." Another says, "Our classes last for 47 minutes. You could have class for 15 minutes and get the same thing out of it. We just go over the same thing, over and over. It's just drill. I would rather work a 9 to 5 job. Maybe it would require more effort, but I would rather work harder where I at least feel that I'm accomplishing something. School is just so discouraging."

These young people do not feel something is wrong with them. Rather, they find something lacking in the system that should support and extend their learning. Implicit in their words is a vision of a different relationship between learning and doing and between school and work.

Growing numbers of school-to-work transition programs are creating such connections. They include career academies, Tech Prep, youth apprenticeships and cooperative education. Regardless of their names or individual features, the most promising of these programs include several common elements:

- the integration of academic and vocational education;
- the integration of secondary and postsecondary education; and
- the integration of academic classroom and work-based learning

When well-designed, such programs can provide young people with three critical ingredients for success in their chosen fields: **competence** through the mastery of skills, **confidence** through the experience of meeting the standards of the workplace, and **connections** to enabling adults and the world of work.

If we took seriously the need to broaden opportunities for youth development by connecting school and work better, the current school experience of most students would look very different than it does today. Here is one vision for what might be possible from the vantage point of a particular high school:

The high school has committed to restructuring its school years in a way that will foster much more active learning for all students to high performance standards. The school sees itself as a partner with local employers, labor unions and community groups, and as creating multiple, structured career pathways to future work and learning for all students.

In the ninth and tenth grades, students are enrolled in an interdisciplinary course called "CityWorks" (developed in one of the Cambridge, MA high schools) in which the city is their text. They explore it, model it, analyze its physical and civic infrastructure. They also have opportunities during the year for job shadowing and for discussing different fields of work with adults who visit the school to participate in CityWorks classes. In addition, they meet with a school-based guidance counselor who helps them to articulate their interests and to create learning and development plans for their high school years.

These plans include the academic classes they will need to take; the preliminary identification of a learning career focus for their upper division years of high school and beyond; and the leadership and extracurricular activities that the students feel will develop skills they want to have. At the end of 10th grade, students take a "certificate of mastery" test of core academic skills that involves a variety of assessment strategies — from portfolios to projects to time-based tests.

Eleventh and twelfth graders are enrolled in a variety of "majors," each of which involves a combination of school-based and community-based learning. Career specialists hired and paid by the private sector, but located in the school, act as liaison between the school, the students and a large group of employers and community organizations. Several hundred of these students are enrolled in structured work-based learning programs (sometimes called youth apprenticeships). Other options include a youth community service or conservation corps, an arts magnet program, and a computer science career academy.

Teachers have access to many professional development opportunities to learn strategies for integrating academic and vocational learning and school-and work-based learning. A common mode for professional development is, in fact, apprenticeship — in which teachers work with master teachers and receive feedback and the chance for reflection on their practice. Teachers also do summer internships in the workplace to familiarize themselves with workplace demands.

Employers, in turn, help out in the classroom and play a major role in organizing access to jobs and work-based learning experiences. They see themselves as sharing responsibility for the development and school-to-work transition of the youth in their communities. The community has received several Presidential awards in recognition of its commitment to youth development and its track record in organizing access to community and work experience for young people.

While this vision is far from the norm in America today, it is not a pipe dream. All around the country, at the local, state and national levels, there is an outpouring of program experimentation and policy change. Youth apprenticeship and other work-based learning programs are growing. Twenty states have joined Jobs for the Future's consortium for school-to-work transition.

Yet, creating such new pathways between school and work raises challenges on both sides of the equation. On the school side, a decade of education reform has left largely untouched how students are motivated and how they learn. Changing schools in ways that both allow a radical restructuring of how learning occurs and provide youth with the extra support and counseling they will need to participate in quality school-to-work transition programs is a major challenge.

The challenges are equally great, if not greater, on the work side of the equation. Are significant numbers of employers willing to participate in such an initiative? Are they willing and able to structure quality work-based learning experiences in their workplaces? Will they work with schools and government to develop industry-recognized skill certificates with broad interstate portability? Will they integrate improved learning opportunities for entry-level workers with upgraded investments in skill training for incumbent workers?

Finally, making the school-to-work transition work better for youth will require developing intermediary structures that the United States currently lacks, structures that can help link school and work, recruit employers, develop integrated curricula, support students, involve institutions of postsecondary education, etc.

Putting in place these kinds of changes requires actors at the federal, state and local levels to take on new roles. The federal government should not attempt to build a school-to-work system through a top-down, federally-mandated approach. Rather, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 puts the federal government in the role of providing venture capital. Giving seed money to states allows them to design and set up programs and build the necessary infrastructure, such as laws, regulations, and a way to certify skill standards so that standards developed at the local level have national portability. In addition, the federal government can play an important role in accelerating learning among states through an aggressive program of technical assistance, research and evaluation, and a communications campaign to convince American businesses, parents, and students of the value of such career pathways.

States need to put in place governance and planning structures, identify promising industries and occupations, create professional development opportunities for school- and work-based instructors, help form business consortia, establish performance measurements and information, etc.

Ultimately, however, it is at the community level where these initiatives will succeed or fail. Community leaders must work together to articulate and then bring into being new pathways to work and further learning for all their young people. This will mean creating ways to organize access to the labor market for youth, getting employer commitment, convincing parents and students of the value of such programs, and helping schools get the resources they need to change how learning occurs.

Clearly, the kinds of changes discussed here mark a significant shift in youth policy for this country. Historically, federal and state youth policy have been built around narrowly targeted programs for the disadvantaged and the hardest to employ. Policy makers argued that since the typical high school graduate would succeed well enough in the labor market, public resources should be concentrated on raising up those in greatest need.

Today, such confidence about the prospects of the "average" student has disappeared. As real incomes slid in the 1970s and 1980s for high school graduates — far more than for those with a college degree — attention has broadened to include the needs of those who will make it through high school, but will still be unprepared academically or occupationally to advance into well paying careers.

There is now broad consensus that our nation must devote far more attention and resources to the academic and occupational preparation of all young people if we are to compete effectively in the global economy, maintain high productivity growth, and improve our national standard of living. And there is little doubt that for this to occur it will require a sea-change in the way employers, high schools, and postsecondary institutions interact and collaborate.

Many challenges lie ahead for those who would create such a movement. Three in particular stand out:

- **reaching scale:** The U.S. is very good at creating demonstration projects; what is needed is a system that is accessible to large numbers of young people.

- **defining and preserving quality:** These programs must offer very high quality academic preparation, leadership development and job-based learning; otherwise, they will perpetuate a two-track system of job opportunity. As funding and interest grow, it will be important to set standards for quality.

- **keeping the focus on youth and their needs:** It will be easy for these programs to become the turf of established institutions, rather than pathways that serve young people. As support for "career pathways" grows, it will be important to ensure that their guiding objective remains youth development, meaning the development of the whole person, rather than "remediation" for some kids or a narrow "preparation" for jobs. Young people must be involved in program design, governance, and evaluation. Programs will need multiple points of entry and exit and perhaps a modular system of credentialling if they are to be responsive to today's young Americans.

Creating a national system of diverse pathways from school to work and further learning for all young people is a daunting challenge. It is also critically important for the country's future. We have an imperative to stretch our imaginations and to organize and sustain our efforts to achieve such a vision.

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The American High School

Michael Timpane

Anyone concerned with youth development in the United States, historically or contemporaneously, must come to grips with the comprehensive high school. This distinctively American invention is the most significant focal point in the development of most youth. Even those youths who are less actively involved in secondary education are identified, for the most part, by their performance or lack thereof in high school -- tagged there as "developmentally delayed" or "emotionally disturbed" or "learning disabled," often wending their way through a series of educational failures to become pushouts or dropouts, and only then the wards of the social welfare or criminal justice system.

The comprehensive American high school has developed gradually throughout this century, reaching its full definition in the post-war years as set forth in James Conant's reports of the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was seen not only as an educationally productive institution, gathering together an immense array of educational offerings in an efficient and effective way, but also touted as fundamentally democratic. It brought all of the children of the community under one roof and offered each of them the individual opportunity to progress to the limits of his or her ability. In this regard, the high school was even more democratic than the other American educational staple, the neighborhood elementary school, with its intimations of built-in social class distinctions based on income and housing patterns.

It is indeed the case that the American high school has many accomplishments to its credit. During the past two generations, it has become a much more universal institution for youth, as we have moved from graduating 50 percent of each age cohort to about 75-80 percent. It has, at the same time, developed and diversified its course offerings to provide the academic basis (however minimal in many instances) for fully one-half or more of its graduates to go on to higher education. And it has been the site, in many communities, of extensive and challenging attempts to provide a socially and racially integrated experience for young people. Imperfectly and yet substantially, high schools have also played an important part in society's response to painful changes in family structure, function, and child-rearing, and to startling changes in sexual behavior and drug use and abuse.

Without minimizing its real accomplishments in the face of such staggering challenges, we can now see that the comprehensive high school is an institution with substantial, often intractable, limitations -- not all of its own making:

- It has reached the limit of its democratic pretensions. Having moved from serving one-half to serving three-quarters of the population, it has not developed strategies that enable it to successfully retain, let alone succeed educationally with, the remaining one-fourth of the nation's young people. And even where it has achieved racial, ethnic, and economic diversity in its student body, it is often riven by internal segregation and continuing intergroup tensions.

- Similarly, within its programs it has developed pervasive tracking procedures, separating academic from vocational tracks, and within the academic program, separating college-bound programs from other, less demanding, offerings, developing the "general" curriculum as a mishmash of courses, often driven by an ill-disguised consumerism among students, serving neither academic nor vocational purposes in any significant way.

- In many of our large cities, the comprehensive high school has become a cruel parody of its original purposes. Thousands of poor and minority students find themselves segregated in huge, deteriorating educational plants, in which little is expected of them and little given to them -- to which the young people respond appropriately enough by leaving in great numbers long before graduation.

- In its very size and hierarchical structure, the high school has become the incubator for peer group development. As James Coleman has chronicled so well, the high school (along with other social and economic developments) helps separate young people from society and, in its strict age grading, even from one another. Students experience, and often take refuge in, the anonymity of numbers. Their ties are mostly with one another and work to little educational purpose. They end up alienated from society's and the school's purposes.

- It has been notably impervious to reconceptualization and reform. Notwithstanding numerous and promising innovations, such as magnet schools, alternative high schools and theme high schools, the great majority of American secondary school students attend traditional comprehensive high schools. These schools are usually powerful and autonomous educational institutions in any community. They change little from year to year or decade to decade.

Now, as always, there are promising proposals for the improvement of secondary education in America. In some ways, these proposals are the latest blooms of hardy perennials, focusing as they do upon educational standards, curriculum design, the size and shape of the high school program, and transitional programs from high school to the workplace and to further education. Nevertheless, important new perspectives are embedded in each case, suggesting new opportunities to reshape this vital but stubborn institution.

NATIONAL GOALS, STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

These national efforts may bring pressure for change to the high school in two ways:

1. They impart the essential message that every student in America can and must be educated to a high level. This is not a message that all Americans believe. Some do not believe that all children can learn at a high level, especially children unlike their own. Others believe that all children, including their own, do not need to be educated at high levels, particularly if it involves any strain or discomfort. Yet others believe that the educational performance of young people is not important to their lives; for them, education is all cost and no benefit. These attitudes are the soft underbelly of political support for education in the United States. If the National Goals effort can slowly reeducate the American people to the necessity for excellence throughout the educational system for every student, it will have an immense and beneficial effect. It will be reflected significantly in our expectations of performance in the secondary school years, since other, earlier measures are intermediate, and the most important payoff occurs at the end of a student's high school experience in graduation to further education or a working life.

2. The establishment of specific curricular standards -- already underway in many states -- and the development of excellent curricular frameworks for reading, math, science, literature, and history should lead to state and local policies that focus educational programs on insuring that more and more students reach important educational goals. This is a more problematic effort, fraught with potential conflicts among levels of government and among advocates of diverse educational interests. It holds the danger, as well, of transmogrifying lofty education purposes into yet another generation of onerous bureaucratic routines. It is also the case that local efforts at school reform usually gravitate away from the high school toward the more malleable and congenial elementary school context. It will be a great frustration if the bright and motivated graduates of reformed and restructured elementary schools encounter unreformed and recalcitrant secondary school environments.

CURRICULAR AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

One of the reasons people have shied away from high school reform is the very difficulty of figuring out how to "reform" traditional academic subjects. The heralded new math, science, and interdisciplinary curricula of the 1960s had little fundamental or long-lasting impact on the organization or design of most high school offerings. Only advanced placement courses bear their continuing mark. Now, new learning in cognitive psychology amid new educational requirements emerging from the contemporary labor market combine to produce a rich new pedagogical perspective. As Lauren Resnick has noted, however, school learning and learning outside of school proceed from markedly different perspectives:

- Individuals in school are expected to learn in isolation, whereas in practically all other contexts cognition is shared with other people.
- Schools tend to look upon learning as primarily a mental exercise, whereas in other contexts, such activities are combined with physical and other exertions.
- School learning tends to be generalized, whereas learning elsewhere is specific to the situation.

As the modern workplace changes (along with all of modern life), most good jobs now require high levels of knowledge and skills -- knowledge and skills remarkably similar to those required for success in college. Moreover, the knowledge and skills needed in the workplace will continue to change, putting a premium on lifelong learning and the capacity of individuals to learn new things continually. Fortuitously, contemporary cognitive and educational psychology offers dramatic evidence that people learn best in an active fashion and in an environment in which what they learn builds upon what they already know, where they get continuous feedback on how well they are doing, and where they understand that the learning enterprise helps them attain important personal goals. There seems at the moment to be a tremendous opportunity to link together these two phenomena to form new principles for the design of learning in American high schools. These principles would reduce the artificiality and isolation in which many children experience instruction in many academic subjects; at the same time, they would blur distinctions between academic and career-oriented learning. For the preponderance of students (i.e., all those who do not intend to become scholars or research professionals), the disciplines themselves need mediation and application, not just mastery on their own terms. Instructional programs embodying these principles would entail organized and sustained encounters with adult roles and functions, in the workplace or the community, in ways that build understanding and solidarity between younger and older citizens, as well as enhance learning.

This would be a huge project involving protracted and complex discussions among educators, businesspeople, policy makers, parents, students, teachers, and scholars in the disciplines. It would amount to nothing less than a revolution in secondary education, and this in an educational institution that is the very embodiment of the most profound traditions -- good and bad -- of American public education.

It would be a project, moreover, depending for its legitimacy and success upon enormous changes in American economic policy and labor market behavior. Without plentiful, decently paid jobs (now in desperately short supply) in the much-praised, but less frequently seen high performance workplace, this educational strategy would be a cruel and expensive hoax, which the students would be the first to sense.

There are some signs that rigidities in the organization and management of the high school are slowly dissolving. The educational literature and press are replete with reports of the development over the last decade of thematic high schools, schools within schools, and smaller, specialized high schools, and of changes in vocational offerings to make them more preparatory for high level technical education in the postsecondary sphere.

At the same time, diverse authorities (Ted Sizer, Jim Coleman, Jim Comer, Gerald Grant, Paul Hill, and Sara Lightfoot, to name a few) suggest that an explicit, shared sense of values and mission at the school level is an essential ingredient in educational progress, a necessary step away from the alienating impersonalization and sheer bureaucratic dysfunction of oversized secondary schools, particularly in the great cities.

These developments give us a glimpse of an exciting vision: Smaller high schools, rooted in and respecting the values of their communities, holding high hopes for every student, and designing flexible programs that expect, motivate, and produce learning at high levels for all. This is only a vision, though, and not one for which, in my judgment, either the public secondary education community or its public has a particularly great appetite at this time. There are, though, other sets of secondary schools, called parochial and independent, pursuing such a vision with great vigor. This dichotomy of purpose should keep the school choice debate brisk.

One final point: if we wish to be talking about something other than variations on these same issues 20 years from now -- which is an apt enough characterization of today's discussion relative to that of the 1970s -- then we must return to the questions of will and belief. Unless Americans believe that every child can and must be educated to a high level and begins to reflect this imperative through elected representatives at every level of government, it is unlikely that an accelerated pace of change, leading high schools toward a new vision for the development of American youth, will occur. This order of leadership must be sustained and nationwide. It is precisely the sort of enterprise to which presidents and secretaries of education and labor should devote their precious political capital.

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Paper, Paper Everywhere...But Where Are the Children?

James P. Comer

American students are not being adequately prepared for the social and academic demands of the 21st Century -- the crisis in education described often over the past decade. But there are at least three different groups of students at different levels of crises, with different consequences for the nation if they cannot be moved to greater success.

The traditional high-achieving 10 to 20 percent, more often from privileged economic and educational backgrounds, are not achieving as well as top students from other countries. But most are well above the threshold needed to be successful workers in a scientific and technological economy and probably capable of keeping America competitive in the next century. A large middle group appears to be distracted by material things and popular culture, which leads to inadequate academic effort. Their performance and potential performance as workers and citizens, while worrisome, is probably not disastrous to our nation's future.

The real threat to our well-being as a society is the under-preparation for work and citizenship of students from families under economic and social stress. The failure of these students will not only give us an inadequate supply of competent workers, but will exacerbate every social problem we are now concerned about -- delinquency and crime, violence, teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency, ethnic and racial conflict. These problems can unravel the fabric of our society.

In the past, under-educated people were absorbed into an economy that did not require an education or sophisticated social skills. After the 1960s, an economy based on science and technology, and increasingly service-oriented, required a higher level of academic and social skills. In order to achieve the preparation for academic learning, a high level of community stability and family functioning was needed. But the same science and technology that changed the economy put excessive stress on communities and families. Because of their traumatic social histories, African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans were disproportionately vulnerable. Young people from the families under greatest economic and social stress are least able to succeed in school and are having difficulty finding meaningful, legal employment, and meeting their adult tasks -- learning, working, living in and promoting the development of their families, and functioning as responsible citizens of the workplace, community and family.

As a society we have focused on trying to address the resultant social problems as if they were irrational, willful decisions on the part of the people involved. We have not adequately

focused on creating community and family conditions that would promote adequate development of children; on teaching and learning in school in a way and at a level that would enable them to participate in the economic and social mainstream without engaging in problem behaviors.

And while certain minorities were most in need, we did not recognize the need to adjust all our institutions to better support the developmental needs of all children -- greater in a society made more complex by television, high mobility and other changes. For these reasons, we now have an education crisis across the board, more acute and critical among those from families and communities under the greatest stress.

Only a decade ago, few believed that there was an education crisis in this country. Fortunately, business leaders, concerned about the preparation of their workers, began to pay attention to both the findings of demographers that pointed to a changing work force and of researchers that showed the under-achievement of all American students. The initial response was to blame educators and to seek well-meaning but simplistic solutions such as merit pay, school choice to promote competition, the adoption of schools, and many other efforts. The implicit assumption was that educators and students were simply not trying hard enough, and parents were not interested or not trying. The interest was not only in a simple solution, but in a quick and inexpensive one. There is a growing understanding among business leaders who have been involved in the school improvement effort over time that the solutions cannot be simple, quick or inexpensive (though they need not be inordinately expensive).

Educators have focused on setting and raising standards on curriculum, instruction and assessment. Schools of education have made a variety of curriculum and standards changes. National educational organizations have done the same. Some states and state departments of education have made very extensive changes in standards for administrators, teachers and students. The federal government is doing the same.

The Clinton Administration's Goals 2000 Act addresses the crisis in education and helps our children meet the challenges they will face in the new century. To its credit, the Act calls for uniformly higher standards for all American children. Unlike in the past, Goals 2000's reform agenda rejects the deficit models that blame children and their families for social and academic underachievement. It replaces the deficit model with the central belief of the Effective Schools Movement: "All children can learn."

Goals 2000, like the efforts of state, local and other educational organizations, depends on standards, rules and regulations -- and attendant monitoring. It calls for expert panels at the federal, state, and local levels to arrive at a series of voluntary curriculum standards. On the surface, this may appear to pave the way to thoughtful, comprehensive reform. But only obsessive micro-managers would delight in the implementation and monitoring of this complex process through what would necessarily be a massive paper trail. My concern about this legislation is that by the year 2000 we will be smothered in bureaucratic quicksand, and lose sight of the developmental needs of our children. The children from families under economic and social stress are most likely to get lost in the process.

None of the efforts cited above are wrong. They can all be helpful under some circumstances. But the focus is wrong-headed. Too much effort and energy is too far removed from where teaching and learning take place -- between student and staff in the schoolhouse; with families in their communities. And where legislation seeks to promote parental involvement, it often misses, or even closes out, low-income parents.

Students who are developing well will learn. Thus school staffs must be prepared to work with families and communities to support the development of students. This is particularly true of school staffs serving children from families under economic and social stress, from families least able to prepare them to meet the expectations of the school. And good programs need to make it possible for such families and school staffs to work together to promote student development. But there are many indications that in this complex age of television, with its provocative visual stimulation, high mobility and rapid transmission of ideas, all families are having difficulty providing their children with the kind of support needed to function adequately in school and in life; and all need to be more involved with schools.

In calling for high standards -- without adequately addressing the training, organization, management, financial and social support of schools -- business, education organizations, and the government are asking the same old "education machines" to deliver a new and better education product. Business leaders tell us that they need students capable of analytical thinking, students with problem-solving skills and the ability to cooperate and get along with others, and to live as responsible citizens of the workplace, community and society. This new worker and citizen can best be produced through paying attention to relationships that promote good development and desirable functioning.

Thus, while a different emphasis and level of effort may be needed to address the crisis in education among different groups, the basic approach must be the same -- placing the needs of the developing child at the center of staff preparation efforts, the management of schools, curriculum, instruction and assessment activities, the involvement of parents, the utilization of community supports and technology. In our School Development Program, organization and management are designed to create a climate that enables staff and parents together to support the development of students. Classroom teachers learn to support the development of students by working with a school support team -- parents, social workers, special education teachers, and others with knowledge of child behavior and development. Problems and opportunities in the schools are considered and decisions made through a consensus arrived at through discussion of what is in the best interest of and supports the development of students. Parents work with staff to support the development of students. Academic and social curriculum activities promote student development along the critical pathways important for academic learning.

The curriculum simulates real world activities at all levels of schooling in a way that promotes social development. We are attempting to provide schooling that addresses developmental needs from early childhood through young adulthood by extending our work to pre-kindergarten efforts in one direction and middle and high school programs in the other. We are working with Dr. Edward Zigler's School of the 21st Century in which health, social and other community services are integrated to help families help children enter school prepared to learn. In one of our middle and high school projects, we are working with Ted Sizer, Howard Gardner and Janet Whitlaw to create curriculum, instruction, and assessment -- strengthened through the use of technology -- that help young people establish the habits and attitudes that will promote desirable learning and preparation for life.

But school reform efforts such as ours can only be instructive. They are too difficult to maintain over time and affect too few students. The lessons learned must be institutionalized, and the primary institution must be teacher and administrator preparatory colleges and universities.

Many critics feel that the inertia and resistance to change in such institutions are too great to overcome. But because preparatory institutions are the major pipeline to schools, they cannot be written off. It should be possible for state departments of education, legislatures, teachers, parents and others to work cooperatively to make the adjustments necessary to prepare teachers adequately to work in modern schools. The federal government could facilitate such an effort. The Agricultural Extension Service provides an excellent model.

When agriculture was the backbone of the American economy, the federal government initiated the Agricultural Extension Program to promote the knowledge about the field being developed in private and public institutions across the country. It engaged the state in efforts to support local farmers. It supported additional research and development. American agriculture became the envy of the world. Today, there is a need to educate students who have not been well educated traditionally. There is new knowledge about how to do so, but it is not being fully utilized. An educational extension service that engages public and private institutions and legislatures in a cooperative effort based on new knowledge could help create an educational system that would be the envy of the entire world. Such a service would need to provide support for change at the pre-service and in-service levels to be effective.

In short, our education crisis must be addressed school by school through preparation that enables all staff to work well with students, and enables parents and community to support the efforts of school staff.

Finally, we cannot ignore the financial inequities that lead to grossly inadequate staff salaries, facilities and equipment in various districts across the country. When teachers are part-time, turning over rapidly, inadequately prepared and placed, we cannot expect students to learn at an adequate level.

We can do better. We must do better.

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Developing Youth Competencies: School Reform Through Collaboration

Norm Fruchter
Michele Cahill

Young people in urban centers across the country increasingly face diminished futures. During the 1980s, a recognition of the growing youth disconnection from pathways of preparation for productive adult lives led to a national public policy focus on prevention. What followed was the development of many programs to address specific problems such as dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Schools, the central public institution in the lives of children and youth, often became the preferred locus for these programs, and countless schools added social services, health programs, and educational services provided by community-based organizations.

The experiences of these programs, as well as findings from evaluation research, suggested some limitations of the single-problem approach in meeting youth needs and preparing youth for successful adulthood. These programs often provided services that were partial, fragmented and limited in their scope and impact. Many programs were able to engage youth in only small areas of their lives or for too little time or with too few resources. Programs often operated at the margins, unable to provide major supports in young people's lives, to connect them effectively with such supports, or to effect change in the major institutions, such as school, where many youth experienced repeated failure.

Yet, some school/community programs had positive impacts, and their experiences suggest ways to promote more positive outcomes for youth. Effective prevention programs helped young people form positive relationships with adults, master a skill, and contribute both to their own well-being and to the lives of their peers. Many successful programs addressed both cognitive and social development and promoted broad community-wide interventions that involved key institutions such as families, peer groups, churches, community organizations and schools. Central to the effectiveness of these successful programs was a focus on meeting youth needs and engaging them in processes through which they could build a broad range of skills or competencies.

This youth development approach stresses the developmental needs of young people and the acquisition of the competencies needed for effective adulthood (Pittman and Cahill, 1991). This approach suggests that strategies to improve youth outcomes must provide all youth with supports for meeting needs and opportunities to build competencies. Pittman and Cahill synthesized the following set of core needs and competencies from the literature on adolescent development.

NEEDS fundamental for survival and healthy development:

- a sense of safety and structure
- a sense of belonging
- a sense of self-worth/contributing
- a sense of independence/control over one's life
- a sense of closeness/relationships
- a sense of competence/mastery
- a sense of self-awareness

COMPETENCIES that define the range of behaviors and skills needed for adult success:

- health/physical competence
- personal/social competence
- cognitive/creative competence
- vocational competence
- citizenship (ethics and participation)

Unlike single-problem interventions, ancillary services or prevention approaches, the youth development approach focuses on what all youth need to prepare fully for effective adult lives and then suggests that key social institutions must construct an infrastructure of supports and opportunities that enable young people to meet their needs and build competencies. Clearly, this approach implies that no single institution can operate independently and effectively serve youth. Families, schools, health and human services, business, recreation and cultural organizations, churches and informal groups need to play major roles, collaboratively, to effectively help young people to build broad competencies.

For schools, a youth development approach implies certain principles: a clear focus on youth needs as a starting point in development of educational structures and processes, rather than a more single-minded focus on academic achievement, or the development of cognitive competencies only; and a focus on identifying and meeting the needs of young people across the entire range of developmental competencies. This may seem an overarching, even utopian aim for schools, given the fiscal constraints that have enforced severe underfunding in most urban school districts.

Yet we see the core directions of current national reform movements, as well as the increasing number of collaborations between outside intermediary organizations and urban school systems, as a convergence of trends producing both national and local reform that restructures schooling to respond more directly to youth needs and strives to build youth competencies within more comprehensive developmental frameworks.

1. National School Reform

If we take the work of the Coalition of Essential Schools, initiated by Ted Sizer

and his associates, and the work of the School Development Program, initiated by James Comer and his associates, as emblematic of the core directions in national school reform, we see that through different starting points and different approaches each fosters the building of communities of support for meeting youth needs and promoting achievement of competencies.

The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) focuses on the core academic disciplines as the central engagement of schooling. To provide both depth and intensity of curricular focus, CES schools are encouraged to restructure both school time and the nature of classroom instruction. Less is more, the key CES dictum, involves a fundamental reordering of the school instructional day, week and year to focus intensively on the four key disciplines--math, science, English and social studies.

While this focus may seem to imply a single-minded concentration on academics, reducing the academic focus to these core essentials allows the organization of school structure to concentrate on student developmental needs. This concentration also allows school staff to work closely with, and come to know, their students. Moreover, because, in CES ideology and practice, students become the workers and teachers the coaches, classroom and instructional practices necessarily focus on individual student need and respond to the diversity of student learning styles.

The School Development Program (SDP) reaches the same ends from a very different starting place. SDP's practice, based on long experience in New Haven's schools, seeks to mediate the disparities between home and school cultures that confuse, alienate and often limit children of color. SDP therefore stresses the critical role of a school management team, composed of both teachers and parents, as well as a school mental health team composed of administrators and mental health workers.

The role of the school management team is to improve the school's overall climate and its instructional practices so that all students are helped to become successful academic performers. The team works to resolve the differences between home socialization and school norms and expectations, through positive rather than punitive adaptations on the terrain of the school. The role of the mental health team is to identify individual and systemic student problems as needs that the school can meet by further adaptations of its overall climate and specific instructional approaches.

Again, though both these national reform movements start from differing places -- CES from a focus on academic essentials, SDP from a focus on reducing socialization disparities -- both workto transform the total school setting so that the focus becomes meeting individual student need and realizing student potential and capacity. Moreover, both reforms stress the importance of a set of adults acting collaboratively to meet youth needs and to engage young people as active partners in their own development. Both focus on creating communities of learning that view students in the overall context of comprehensive youth development, rather than a much narrower focus on academic competency alone.

2. Reform through Intermediary Collaboration

A very different development, starting from the efforts to meet individual youth needs through collaboration between school systems and outside intermediary organizations, has grown incrementally, we believe, to become a second major reform direction. Unlike the single problem-focused services, these collaborations involve curriculum, school organization and culture.

Consider the remarkable extent of collaboration within the New York City school system. Since the city's fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s, thousands of external, mostly nonprofit organizations have penetrated the formerly closed terrain of public schooling to offer classes, services, support and assistance to students, their families and the professionals who staff the New York City school system. We call these intervenors external intermediaries because they are located outside the school system and are formally independent of it. During the past two decades, these groups have provided an increasingly important range of school offerings, from arts programming to science education, from literacy education and ESL for parents to psychiatric counseling for troubled students.

A wide range of intermediaries shares several key characteristics: independent nonprofit status; thin administrative structures and informal modes of functioning; strong entrepreneurial drive; origins in and accountability to cultures at some variance from the prevailing rationality and ethos of the New York City school system; and, most important, a vision of how their intervention contributes to the development of students' basic health, academic, social and emotional, vocational and citizenship competencies, as well as a commitment to integrate and institutionalize their intervention into New York City schooling.

When outside intermediaries enter schooling terrain to collaborate with school staff, especially when the intervention is defined as regular, continuous and ongoing, and teachers as well as students are engaged, several processes develop that can, and often do, begin to transform the nature and practices of schooling.

When intermediaries enter schools to introduce new interventions in collaboration with school personnel, a variety of interactions result: new alliances, stimulating challenges, innovations in classroom practice and school organization, release of new energies; but also sharp conflicts, disputes about the value of the intervention, sometimes even ideological or doctrinal polarization. Whatever the particular dynamic in individual schools, these developments can alter, sometimes decisively, the prevailing climate and set of relationships that form the culture, and therefore the prevailing instructional ethos, that ultimately determines the level of student academic performance and more comprehensive student development in schools.

What are the implications of the development, growth and increasing sophistication of intermediary interventions into New York City schooling? Clearly, the role and presence of outside intermediaries directly affects the individual schools involved. More broadly, education as a public sector is being significantly broadened by the inclusion of intermediaries, as both collaboration and more diffuse forms of accountability

extend and complicate traditionally restrictive modes of organization and control. We think these trends may indicate a shift toward a more expansive schooling sector in which the boundaries between public and private nonprofit entities increasingly blur, contributing to significant gains in quality education for all our children.

Certainly these new trends are not unambiguous; they have introduced a range of problems and dilemmas for public education, including issues of governance and management. Can we insure, for example, that the benefits that intermediaries offer are shared equally across school systems, rather than concentrated on those schools and students that might most benefit? The current pattern of intermediary intervention, for example, often privileges entrepreneurial competence, helping those schools (and districts) most capable of initiative to secure the greatest number of intermediary interventions. Nevertheless, this movement toward critical education provision through collaborating with outside intermediary organizations is one of the most promising trends in public education. It suggests how a variety of community partners might work with schools in a comprehensive strategy for meeting youth needs and helping youth develop cognitive, social, vocational, and citizenship competence.

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Making High Schools Work for Career-Bound Children

Gene Bottoms

In the fall of 1987, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) -- in partnership with 13 SREB states and 28 school sites -- set out on a "learning journey." Our goal was simple: to raise significantly the reading, mathematics, science, technical, and problem-solving competencies of career-bound high school students.

We believed that if we could blend the essential content from college preparatory English, math, and science with quality vocational studies, we could raise the academic foundations of students who are enrolled in general and vocational high school programs of study. SREB and the states worked together to help each high school site implement key practices in integrating high-level academic and vocational studies.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

As a consequence of our seven-year journey, we know that it is possible to improve the reading, math, and science achievement of career-bound students. We know that high performance is based on high expectations and that all students can achieve if they have access to extra help and time. We have seen students "turned on" by a challenging and focused program of study which includes complex academic content in vocational courses, hands-on activities in academic courses, and vocational majors that prepare students for broad career fields. We have verified that students learn more when they are respected and seen as worthy and when academic and vocational teachers work together.

We also know that it is not easy to make changes in high schools, and that the most difficult barriers are the routines embedded in the very fabric of today's high schools. The barriers derive from entrenched beliefs that certain students will not and cannot learn. The result is a "sorting system" in which very little is expected of students enrolled in general and vocational studies. In the "pecking order" of most high schools, many teachers do not want to work with low-level classes, yet many career-bound students are "warehoused" into basic, repetitive courses.

The way to change high schools and achieve results is to break the old barriers. This process takes place school-by-school, foxhole-by-foxhole. There is no magic mass production system for change.

For a school to change, the leaders and teachers need a vision of how the school can be different. They need an opportunity to determine where they are and where they want to be. To close the gap between "what is" and "what can be," the faculty must become a "learning community" that constantly engages in new practices to advance the achievement of career-bound students. External support in the form of technical assistance and staff development is essential.

Finally, schools need to learn to use assessment data as a management tool to measure where they are, what is working, and what is not working. Without a data management system linking student outcomes to school practices, school leaders do not have the tools for change.

WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

Believing that we are onto something that is very important -- and workable -- SREB and its partner states have embarked on "phase two." The goal is to help each state create a network of 10 to 20 high schools committed to the goals and key practices of the *High Schools That Work* program. Based on the early positive results of the program, we have expanded to include more than 300 school sites in 19 states.

Another important aim is to help states learn how to work with a network of schools over along period of time as they make substantive changes. One problem in education is that we have a new "savior" every six months. We push a new initiative -- talk about it, write about it -- and then move on to the next "silver bullet." Substantive changes take time. States must be willing to enter into a long-term partnership with their participating school sites.

As we enlarge the program, we plan to build on the key practices and services we have provided from the beginning:

- Twenty advanced *High Schools That Work* sites will plan structured work-based learning initiatives that will link high schools, postsecondary schools, and employers in providing students with an industry-recognized credential upon completion of a prescribed program.
- Until now, the major emphasis in the *High Schools That Work* program has been on integrating high-level academic content into technical and vocational courses. In phase two, we will expand the key practice dealing with vocational studies as we aid sites in redesigning vocational courses to emphasize broader technical content and to focus on a career field or industry. The primary intent will be to prepare high school graduates for continued learning.
- We will develop a *Certificate of Mastery* built on three pillars: 1) The first will document that the student has completed a solid program of study as prescribed in the *High Schools That Work* program; 2) The student will demonstrate a proficiency level on national tests in reading, math, and science; 3) The student will demonstrate adequacy on competencies that employers consider necessary for success in the modern workplace.
- Finally, we will offer the *High Schools That Work* school improvement and assessment package to high schools that are not participating in the program.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR REDESIGNING VOCATIONAL STUDIES

In redesigning high school vocational studies, we will be guided by basic principles:

- Increasingly, the workplace is based on intellect and symbols. We must make sure that vocational studies have a higher level of intellectual integrity.
- As technology becomes more integrated, vocational programs must introduce students to a broader base of technical knowledge.
- In many ways, existing vocational programs are locked into preparing students for an entry-level job. An example of a traditional vocational program is one that prepares students for a specific job, such as a bank teller. A modern vocational program, on the other hand, uses a substantially different curriculum to prepare students for not just one banking job but for a range of responsibilities in the broad field of finance.
- While over 75 percent of students in a vocational major work during their junior and senior years of high school, the jobs are often poorly connected to school and do little to improve students' learning or link students to a career path. A redesign of vocational studies must include greater use of the work setting.
- Historically, vocational programs have used incumbent workers in a given field to plan programs. As we plan broader-based programs with a strong intellectual base, the planning committee will look different. It will include incumbent workers, employers with a "windshield view" of workplace requirements, professionals from the field, teachers from two- and four-year schools and colleges, and high school English, mathematics, and science teachers.
- New vocational programs must give students the capacity to continue to learn on the job and in further education.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policies designed to improve high school and postsecondary school for career-bound youthshould seek to set high expectations and to raise the quality of academic and technical instruction. We must break the mindset that expects students who are behind to catch up via low-level and remedial courses. We must place these students in regular courses and offer them extra help on their own time to meet the higher standards.

Any strategy to improve academic and vocational education for career-bound youth must be carried out school-by-school. We must help schools adopt the best practices, create a learning community for the faculty, and obtain and use management information that shows what is working and what is not.

A framework of policy initiatives for career-bound students should increase opportunities for combined school-based and work-based learning that results in a recognized credential and connects students to career pathways that pay a decent wage. Policies should encourage high schools, two-year postsecondary schools, and employers to work together.

The developed Asian and European countries have systems of education that connect career-bound youth with jobs that have a career pathway. In the United States, such a system does not exist. We allow too many high school graduates from the general and vocational tracks to

flounder in the world of work for a decade or longer before they find their "niche" in employment. Despite current problems, we in this nation have the potential to build a new, accelerated, mainstream system of education connecting career-bound youth to a solid career pathway.

The critical features of the *High Schools That Work* program, the elements of the Tech Prep initiative linking high schools and two-year community and technical colleges, and the Youth Apprenticeship movement -- with its emphasis on structured work-based learning connected to quality school-based learning -- contain the basis of a new system of education that can greatly improve future frontline workers for our nation. We have the potential to develop a system of education that will open vistas of opportunity for career-bound students--a system built on high-status academic and technical studies at the high school and postsecondary levels and work-based learning that results in a recognized credential.

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Common Sense Policy for Inner-City Youth Investment

Lynn A. Curtis
Vesta Kimble

In 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, a bipartisan panel appointed by President Johnson after the deadly riots in Newark and Detroit, issued its famous report concluding that America was moving toward two societies "one black and one white, separate and unequal." The Commission asked the nation "to mount programs on a scale equal to the dimension of the problem" to break its cycle of inner-city riots and to invest in the workers of tomorrow.

If the United States were to scale the solution to the dimension of the problem, an estimated $15 billion would be needed in federal annual appropriations for each of the next ten years to replicate or expand programs that have proven successful in helping inner-city children and youth. A similar sum is needed to reconstruct inner cities and to close the investment and productivity gaps.

DOING WHAT WORKS

This level of funding would be enough to provide for the following child and youth investment strategies for nearly all eligible children and youth:

- Head Start, the federally funded enriched pre-school program for youngsters from low-income families;
- Neighborhood-based, nonprofit organizations, which serve youth after-school, on weekends and during the summer by providing a safe haven in a disciplined environment where adults mentor the youth, offering enriched activities, tutorial and remedial education, job readiness and job training and other social services;
- Job Corps, the comprehensive federal job training program, as well as similarly comprehensive private-sector training programs (like Project Prepare, Project ProTech and YouthBuild), which recognize the necessity of social services and long-term follow-up services for high-risk youth who are entering the workforce;
- Nonprofit community development corporations and private, national nonprofit community development intermediaries (like the Enterprise Foundation and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation);
- Community banking initiatives (like the South Shore Bank in Chicago) as well as the creation of a new entity, a National Development Bank; and,
- Community-oriented policing strategies -- for example, police officers and their families living in the inner-city neighborhoods they patrol -- which can help secure inner-city neighborhoods and play a supportive role for economic investment and social development among high-risk youth.

This level of investment -- a minimum total of $150 billion in appropriations for children and youth and a minimum total of $150 billion in appropriations for coordinated housing, infrastructure and high-tech investment over a decade, at least -- would begin to improve conditions in the inner cities so that children and youth could thrive and become productive members of society in their adult lives.

RESEARCH INSTEAD OF RHETORIC

These investments must be accompanied by rigorous evaluations, including

data for qualitative, journalistic "process" measures as well as quantitative, outcome measures collected for up to five years with "test" and "comparison" groups. There should be measures both of change among high-risk children and youth and change in the community.

No longer should we tolerate public relations campaigns and spin-control policies that attempt to measure their success based on independent variables, rather than dependent ones. In the absence of sound evaluation criteria, national, state and local programs will continue to be supported more because they fit the political fashion of the moment or because they are able to capture media attention than because of their demonstrated effectiveness. In a time of limited resources, we can no longer afford such rhetoric.

POLITICS AS USUAL VS. COMMON SENSE POLICY

The demonstration project approach to inner-city revitalization is temptingly inexpensive in the short run, and its isolated success stories feed on the positive public exposure that news media and congressional district funding opportunities foster. But demonstration programs will never create a significant national impact, even though nonprofit service delivery organizations try to survive on lean demonstration program monies. Yet, demonstration-level funding is cheered on by federal agencies, whose increasingly overlapping program areas now allow housing-related funds to be spent on anti-crime activities, while law enforcement-related funds are dedicated to social services, while human services-related funds are spent on job creation activities, and labor-related funds are channeled into after-school activities.

Instead of these disjointed and haphazard efforts, what is needed is coordination among federal agencies (especially the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Transportation and Justice) ideally through a centralized office within the White House.

The Clinton Administration's initiatives for inner-city youth investment largely depend upon several demonstration programs instead of strategies that implement to scale. For example, "empowerment zones" are being designed as enriched versions of the previous enterprise zone concept. The national community service initiative serves few youth initially and might leave out youth who are most in need. Other Clinton Administration proposals -- such as expanding Head Start and Job Corps -- more closely resemble comprehensive approaches, although they serve merely as bookends in the span of years for high-risk child and youth needs. Under the Clinton Administration, community development corporations are to receive more attention as implementing agencies in the inner city; however, their potential for housing and infrastructure repair and job training have not been realized. Only two options presently are available for youth investment policy for the inner city: spreading scarce resources thinly across many places, which does not work, or spreading scarce resources over a few places, which does not create national impact. The lesser of the two evils is the latter.

Initially, we should invest enough in the highest priority locations to make an impact -- felt at least across an entire devastated community, like South Central Los Angeles, even if we cannot do enough for other places in Los Angeles and in other cities. Later, we must make good on a political promise to impact significantly all of the truly disadvantaged children and youth throughout the nation. That will require great political courage, and perhaps more unified cooperation from Congress than the nation can expect.

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Making a High Skills Strategy Work

Larry Good

During the past decade, we've learned a couple of very important lessons about the connection between school and work:

- **Skills matter.** The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce made that point sharply in *America's Choice: high skills or low wages!* There is a direct correlation between levels of skills and the ability to gain and hold good jobs.

- **The United States needs a vastly improved school-to-work transition, embracing work-based learning.** We've arrived at the point where an increasingly broad array of education policy makers and practitioners agree that work-based learning is a crucial and valuable approach to preparing young people for successful entry into the workforce and that improving the transition from school to work is vital. It is certainly encouraging that President Clinton is committed to investing in expanding work-based learning across the country.

These are two extraordinarily profound findings that most of us working in this field tend to take for granted today. But we must not assume that our beliefs are going to translate easily into widely adopted systemic change. Too many important ideas stall at the stage of pilot programs and small scale actions, and never achieve the scope of impact desired and needed.

At least three major danger signs are flashing in our path:

- **While many policy makers now support a high skills solution, no similar consensus exists among the public.** Survey research, such as that by the Public Agenda Foundation, shows that the American public does not believe that skills matter. Thus far, we have not successfully engaged either parents or students in the proposition that excellent skills are the only path to good-paying jobs.

- **Employer buy-in is equally limited.** While some industry sectors and individual companies are investing deeply both in upgrading their current workforces and helping prepare young people for employment, far too many employers are doing neither. Anecdotes abound of the difficulties in finding employers willing to participate actively in work-based learning, for example.

- **Accurate, understandable, accessible career information is extremely hard to find.** In a world of rapidly changing careers, the information sources that do exist frequently are out-of-date, school counselors know far more about transitions to college than to employment and, for most people, no good source of help is available for making career and job search decisions.

We ignore these danger signs at our peril. They are important symptoms of underlying forces that need to be addressed if a new set of school-to-work transition programs is ever to touch millions of young people rather than hundreds.

For the past two years, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce has focused on these challenges. What we've learned points toward some answers:

1. Engage public opinion

Public attitudes about policy issues, whether health care, the environment or workforce skills, form slowly and take a long time to shape into a consensus for action. Opinion research expert Daniel Yankelovich argues that public opinion must move through several stages of development before action can be supported.

This is a crucial issue. Without parents and young people believing that skill development is truly central to obtaining a good job and understanding what to do about it, educators and public policy wizards will lack the support required to pay for or sustain initiatives.

We tend to ignore or downplay this issue. At most, we respond with short-term publicity campaigns. Instead, we need to be undertaking regular quantitative opinion research on this subject in communities across the country and then strategically constructing actions that are data-driven. This is an agenda that political leaders from the President to governors to mayors can help advance enormously by engaging people in a dialogue about the connection between skills and jobs and how we compare to competing nations.

The environmental movement provides an excellent example of focusing on building public awareness and consensus about resource protection and management simultaneous to efforts to improve the protection of air, water, and land. After a quarter century of effort, we enjoy a fairly broad consensus about the importance of the environment.

We don't have a quarter century left in the workforce preparation field, or we will waste the potential of millions of current workers and students and continue to see a loss of good jobs to other countries. It is imperative that we engage the public in a sustained focus on this agenda immediately.

2. Build working labor markets

Many of the models currently being applied to the effort to improve U.S. workforce skills copy the centralized, statist approaches of other industrialized nations. But this risks ignoring American political and social culture.

Our historical covenant regarding education and skills in America has been forged at the community level. We elect local school boards, adopt local taxes and operate locally. The theme of "local control" is at the heart of the American education tradition. Similarly, the marketplace for workers and their skills in the U.S. is predominantly community-based. Employers typically recruit and hire for a given operating site from within the local

labor market, selecting from the products of local schools and those already in the community's labor force.

While workforce policy should be envisioned and adopted at both the national and state levels, American reality teaches that the outcomes of the policy are modulated and driven by the dynamics of the community marketplace. The community is where real life change occurs.

We've come to believe that communities are places in which it is possible to connect parents, students, workers, employers and educators in this agenda. Communities offer an organizing mechanism for self-sustaining activity around workforce skills, in which all stakeholders (not just government) invest money and time in skill development and maintenance.

We must organize at the local level on this issue to achieve lasting national impact. It is the only level at which we move from policy wonking and legislative debates to actions that actually touch people.

The U.S. has natural labor markets. They just don't work very well. We see the public policy role to be creating and improving the mechanisms that are required for successful market function. Our work suggests three spheres of activity must be engaged and connected to establish well-functioning labor markets organized on the basis of high skills:

- Create a core of employers who demand and use highly skilled workers.
- Develop the capacity to offer the education and training needed for a highly skilled workforce.
- Gain public commitment to the value of increased and continuously improving skills.

Achieving success means we must focus in an integrated manner on all three of these spheres. No one alone is sufficient to achieve both the demand, the supply and the support required to realize systemic results touching large numbers of people.

3. Create career management centers

Anyone who has had to look for employment or to recruit for a position can attest to some of the weaknesses inherent in our current "non-system" of labor exchange in this country. The Employment Service is a weak public institution, while higher quality private sector alternatives serve only those markets in which employers will pay sufficient fees for their services.

In reality, our problem is deeper than just labor exchange. We lack coherent, effective places for people to obtain career counseling. The data regarding careers and jobs is scattered, frequently outdated, and not at all consumer friendly. Whether leaving school or making mid-career transitions, people require good information to make good decisions about career paths, education and jobs.

A solution is to create career management centers in communities across the country. These centers would be customer-focused; they should be highly visible and feel and look professional and friendly to the user -- avoiding the abandoned grocery store appearance of too many public offices. They should be open to anyone interested in their services, regardless of income and regardless of whether a client is in school or employed. The centers could offer a variety of services, including assessment, career planning information, career counseling, job search assistance, job listings, financial aid screening, and information about education and training options available in the community.

Versions of this idea were discussed in the latter stages of the Bush Administration, but tended to play out as co-location of JTPA and Employment Service staffs only. The need is for a broader construct that reaches beyond the limited populations now served by those agencies and provides useful information to the public at large. Without question, some of the information products will need to be created or improved. That's an investment from which the public and the federal government can realize an excellent return.

Work on these three fronts will go a long way toward constructing the actions and support required for high skills and good jobs to be achievable in this country for many years to come.

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Apprenticeship Programs for the American Youth Labor Market

Paul Osterman

There is a great deal of promise in the idea of a national system of youth apprenticeships, and it is good news that such programs are being developed. Nonetheless, caution is in order because much less is known about what actually works than we would like to believe.

CHARACTERIZING THE YOUTH LABOR MARKET

Any discussion of youth apprenticeships should begin with a description of the youth labor market. Is it job quality or job acquisition that poses problems for young workers? The question can be answered in two ways. For inner city -- often minority -- youth, the problem lies in a real lack of jobs. Indeed, the situation of minority youth represents a major social crisis: In October 1992, only 21.2 percent of 16-to-19 year-old black youth were employed, compared to 45.9 percent of 16-to-19 year-old white youth.

The problems of at-risk youth have long been at the center of federal policy; unfortunately, however, past efforts have not been very effective. One of the concerns regarding apprenticeship programs is that at-risk youth may not be well served by them. Because the programs rely heavily on obtaining training placements in private sector firms -- placements that will be hard to achieve -- there will be a strong tendency to cater to the most job-ready youth. Nonetheless, the fact that apprenticeship models have this characteristic is not a fatal flaw, provided that adequate additional resources are devoted to at-risk youth.

Youth who will graduate from high school, but most likely will not attend college, face a different problem: job quality. While there has been a slight downturn in youth employment, there is no evidence that jobs have begun to "dry up" for these youth. The early years in the labor market for many graduating students are characterized not by an absence of jobs but rather by a "churning" process. Frequent job change is evident during this period when youth sample different jobs or simply move from one low-skill job to another. The problem facing youth who experience this churning process is more subtle than the simple absence of jobs. What happens when the period of churning has concluded? Evidence suggests that a substantial fraction of this cohort has been unable to "settle down" into quality jobs. While in the past, most youth in their late twenties -- even if they did not attend college -- could expect eventually to obtain stable employment, this is no longer true. My calculations using the National Longitudinal Survey show that as many as 30 percent of high school youth had not, by their late twenties, found a steady job.

The difficulty that youth face in successfully settling down is exacerbated by changes in the adult or career labor market, in which the most pervasive change has been the rising demand for skills. Increasing premiums for skill are best demonstrated by the growing inequality in wages received by high school and college graduates.

Youth labor market churning as well as changes in the adult labor market impact youth apprenticeship design. For example, the location of placements (in either the youth or adult markets) becomes an important consideration. Will youth apprenticeship slots be created in positions in the youth labor market that have no return for skill? Or, will programs place apprentices in the upper-end or adult labor market, which has always had an aversion to hiring youth? If apprentices are placed in an adult labor market on a large scale, employers must overcome their dislike or distrust of young employees.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

New program initiatives must be considered in a context characterized by rather weak efforts to link school and work. For example, only ten percent of students who found employment after high school used school resources to locate those jobs; other survey data show that less than 50 percent of students have even seen a high school counselor -- much less used the resources that schools provide. There currently are no broad-based institutions linking school and work.

To provide the infrastructure necessary for a successful system of youth apprenticeship, policy must clearly delineate program objectives. Apprenticeship programs can be seen as having three alternative, broad goals:

- **Youth apprenticeship as a strategy for school reform.** One way to reform schooling is to link it to work. Making the high school experience more meaningful and compelling encourages students to continue their education. Most importantly, by initiating curricular changes that integrate academic and vocational learning and teach academic subjects in the context of work, schools can provide job-relevant abilities to students and motivation for traditional academic learning. Additional components include encouraging youth to continue their education beyond high school and using work experience to encourage students to make the extra investment.

- **Youth apprenticeship as a labor market program.** This perspective views youth apprenticeship as a "jobs program." The focus is to hasten the transition from school to work and to avoid whatever costs are incurred as part of the churning process.

- **Youth apprenticeship as creating institutional structures that link employers and schools.** In this view, the central objective is to establish a community structure that can react effectively to changing needs in the

schools and the youth labor market. Apprenticeships provide a forum within which labor market actors (businesses and unions) can work with schools to improve the curriculum and provide jobs. From this perspective, the apprenticeship initiative may be viewed as beginning a process, not simply as establishing a program. This point becomes particularly important because we currently lack information on what constitutes "best practice" or what makes an apprenticeship model effective. We need to establish a flexible structure that will adjust as each community's experience emerges.

In thinking through these alternative visions, it is clear that each has different implications for program design. For example, if the primary objective is to motivate academic learning by providing a work-related context, then options such as school-based enterprises are viable, and finding job placements to teach usable skills becomes less central. If the initiative is seen primarily as a jobs program, then elements such as a school-based employment service are important and the quality of the job placements becomes central.

In deciding which of these objectives is most plausible, it is helpful to draw upon the experience of existing programs. Four current models, which differ in terms of the balance of school and work tasks, inform the design of future programs. The first is cooperative education, which offers part-time jobs in the latter-half of the school day. At present, approximately eight percent of high school juniors and seniors (430,000) are enrolled in these programs. Career academies, schools-within-schools organized around specific occupations, reach a much smaller cohort: 9,000 students through 150 programs. Tech-Prep, which links schools and community colleges, enrolls 80,000 students. The last example, apprenticeship demonstration models, is the most recent. Roughly 30 demonstration models, involving 5 to 115 students each, have been attempted. Although evaluation results are in short supply, several broad conclusions emerge from the available information:

- Low quality work experience does not seem to have employment, wage, or school retention payoffs. This issue is important for "scaling up" apprenticeship programs.
- Students who find their own jobs through the normal operation of the youth labor market seem to experience positive short-run, post-high school payoffs. However, long-term impacts are unknown and impacts on in-school academic performance are mixed, with some evidence that "excessive" work experience can degrade school performance.
- While there is no evidence of economic gains from co-op education, career academies, and tech prep, results do indicate that there are positive effects on attitudes, attendance, and drop-out rates for some models. However, it is unknown which program components actually contribute to the positive effects.
- Although there is little available data to measure outcomes of the new apprenticeship demonstration programs, the existing evidence does suggest caution. For example, Boston's Project Pro-Tech has experienced mixed results. Only a surprisingly small fraction of high school students met the (relatively low) entry standards, which suggests that this model would be difficult to implement on a large scale. Furthermore, among those who did enter the program, subsequent termination rates were very high. On the other hand, those who continued in the program were more likely than others to remain in grade-level math and science. The program also has experienced difficulty inducing curriculum change in its participating high schools.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

Regardless of which philosophy is chosen as a framework for design, certain principles should be considered during the construction of any program. The following questions provide a gauge to test the components of any proposition:

Does the program permit mind-changing and avoid tracking? The current American system, for all its weaknesses, has one major virtue relative to foreign models: young people are able to change their minds, since they are not locked in at an early age to a particular school or career path. It is very important to preserve this characteristic, and it is as essential to ensure that new programs are of high quality -- to avoid the perception that they serve as "dumping grounds" for "less able" students.

Does it link work and schooling in a substantive way? As already indicated, the choice among the broad program goals will influence the content of program activities. Nonetheless, at the core of all program models should be the linking of school and work. This involves using work experience to motivate academic activities and to transform the teaching of academic subjects; using work to motivate continued school attendance; developing more effective bridging mechanisms, such as school-based employment services, between schools and the labor market; and transforming job placements into learning environments.

Does it encourage continued schooling beyond high school? Not all young people should be expected to continue into postsecondary education, and it would be incorrect to make this an absolute criteria for program design. This is particularly true if the apprenticeship effort is seen primarily as a youth jobs effort. However, the earning situation of youth with only a high school degree is deteriorating; every possible effort should be made to encourage young people to seek additional schooling. This involves assuring that participation in the program does not preclude the option of additional schooling. In a more proactive sense, it involves encouraging postsecondary education by involving four-year and community colleges in actual program activities and by creating mechanisms that ease the transition between different levels of schooling for students.

Does it avoid gender discrimination? Foreign models, which have served as the basis for the U.S. discussion, too often make gender-based distinctions. This dynamic certainly must be avoided.

Does it avoid adult displacement? This issue emerges when youth apprenticeships are discussed in terms of scale and when the location of the apprenticeship position -- in the youth or adult labor market -- is considered. Publicly sponsored jobs for youth should not result in unemployment for adults.

Does it avoid narrow or highly specific training? Programs should not create systems that subsidize employers to train people in narrowly focused skills.

Does it provide quality work placements, not just work experience? As already noted, work experience programs have not had much success. Although the intensity of the job placements may vary, depending on which of the program objectives is chosen, it is important that the placement be seen as something other than "make-work."

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Given the numerous uncertainties associated with large-scale expansion of the kind of school-to-work transition programs described here, it is important that considerable care be taken to learn lessons as they emerge. This means that resources should be dedicated to documenting experience, evaluating outcomes, and learning from best practice. Policy makers need to be sure that considerable care is taken to design an effective strategy for learning the lessons that will emerge from the expanded effort. It is also important to provide a mix of formal evaluations and field-based "best practice" research.

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Youth Development in the Information Age

Ron Jenkins

Imagine if during the next ten years, youth work were to undergo the same degree of dynamic change and transformation that has taken place in the computer industry: Focusing on a youth development agenda in the same way that personal computers have replaced mainframe systems would qualify as a dramatic shift in paradigm. The tremendous changes occurring in the field of computerization offer a case study of the forces and factors that create and contribute to significant change, such as those I foresee in youth work.

The saga of IBM reminds us that no one person, group, corporation, or system can totally control or predict the outcome of change. In the field of computers, change is a process that creates both risks and opportunities. Change poses new problems to be solved and has a rippling impact throughout society. Change involves more than new products, programs and projects; change is also about attitudes and behaviors.

When we compare the attempts to change our youth work system with change occurring in the computer industry, the differences are striking. When we promote reform in youth work, we often do so by highlighting the failings of previous programs or the status quo. Contrast this tactic to the way Microsoft presented its DOS 6 software product. The company did not imply that previous versions were flawed or poorly designed; rather, Microsoft stressed the value of **upgrading** capacity in order to do a more efficient job. Microsoft went to great lengths to emphasize the "compatibility" of their product with existing applications. In no way did Microsoft infer that users would need to buy all new hardware or software in order to use DOS 6.

To say that computers are dramatically affecting our lives is an understatement. The field is supercharged with creative energy. Think how different and exhilarating youth work would be if we could generate similar excitement and optimism.

Have we made the mistake of placing too much emphasis on program development? How many youth-oriented workshops or conferences have you attended where you felt a bit overwhelmed by the amount and quality of new programs that were being marketed? One cannot help but be impressed with the exciting designs of many new programs, especially those based upon a youth development script.

The problem for many of us is that most of these new applications malfunction when we attempt to "install" them into our host organizations. We experience all kinds of system difficulties. If one has a sense of humor about this scenario, one might be tempted to use some interesting computer metaphors.

- My agency lacks the memory space drivers to run the application.
- It would be helpful if the producer of the program would provide on-line support and complete instructions.

- Those who did the "uploading" and "downloading" were not thorough. Files were missing, important drivers were not forwarded and the product was not scanned for bugs.

We have a problem in our work that needs closer attention. Most of our agencies are not configured to run the programs that research tells us youth need and deserve. The reason we have difficulty installing the latest in youth development applications is the fact that the Agency Operating System (A.O.S.) is outmoded and obsolete. Most were designed before or during the mainframe era. They simply lack the "DOS" to operate "youth-friendly" programs. Most of our agencies still rely upon a command structure and a value system that are rigid, simplistic and cumbersome. This structure is antithetical to the design of youth development programs that feature:

- the valuing of youth
- significant levels of youth participation
- the capacity for processing positive information/data
- a seamless interaction between youth and adults in a multi-tasking, diverse environment

In short, most youth-oriented agencies lack the necessary operating system to initiate empowerment, whether it be staff- or youth-directed. If we understand the importance of the concept of compatibility, we realize the seriousness of these system discrepancies. As a profession, we need to make the upgrading of our agencies' operating systems a matter of priority. The more subtle implication is that we need to reconsider who it is we think should be the object of change. For the most part, the programs we have developed are aimed at changing youth. If we shift some of the focus to upgrading our agency system compatibility, we will focus on changing adult attitudes and behaviors.

When I began learning to use a personal computer, I found myself frustrated with all the strange and weird words, commands and ideas. It has been difficult learning to think in new ways and to learn computer language. Because I am not of the Nintendo™ generation, I have struggled to keep pace, at times feeling obsolete, old-fashioned and awkward. Deep down inside, I have feared computers. Frankly, in my frame of reference, computers were only used by nerds or clerical staff.

My learning experience, while humbling, has been beneficial. Aside from giving me a broader intellectual perspective of the work to be done, this process has given me something much more important. I have learned how truly difficult change can be. I have glimpsed my own resistive nature. I have gained a deeper understanding of the reasons my friends and colleagues are so hesitant about embracing a youth development agenda, which, for many, represents change.

Shifting paradigms and promoting real change is easier said than done. We need to give ourselves "permission" to talk about the implications of the philosophy we say we support. By way of initiating this dialogue, I will put forth what I think needs to be done to upgrade the operating system of our youth-service agencies. I propose a prototypical type of agency that will make tremendous demands on everyone involved. I believe fervently that we have the capacity to shift the paradigm and the skills to make our work a dynamic facet of society. If we really want change, it is we who must take the first risks.

SUGGESTED NEW VERSION OF AN UPGRADED AGENCY OPERATING SYSTEM (A.O.S)

In order to achieve compatibility with the latest youth development applications (programs), an agency must have the following minimum capacities:

The ability to operate according to the values and principles inherent in Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory.

The capacity to manage processes and tasks in accordance with the latest techniques associated with Total Quality Management (TQM) theory. Specifically:

- Planning and allocating resources and services within the context of a consumer-oriented philosophy.
- Creating a participatory internal culture that values and respects all persons within the organization and that fosters inclusivity and diversity.
- Implementing quality assurance procedures that measure stated values, i.e., respecting youth, with the same degree of scrutiny we devote to measuring client outcomes.

Develop the ability to become a community resource in the following ways:

- Provide the community with expertise and information that can reduce the adverse conditions -- like racism, poverty, sexism -- that drive the need for remedial services.
- Help build the capacity of the community to promote Positive Youth Development experiences and opportunities, including serving as an example to the community in such ways as:
    - Involving non-client youth as volunteers to the agency.
    - Collaborating with other human service sectors (police, fire, health) to learn how these professions carry out prevention strategies that have community-wide applicability.

Let me reiterate the actions that I believe will produce constructive change:

- Make compatibility our platform for change.
- Upgrade the operating capacity of all youth agencies and organizations.
- Utilize tools that will help maximize available resources.
- Use our newly acquired computer skills to change reality.

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Don't Forget Young People in Foster Care!

David S. Liederman

We hear a lot about youth development these days, but youngsters in the child welfare system are often left out of the discussion. These youngsters are ignored despite the fact that they are very much like their peers who live with birth families and kin. Like all young people, youth in family foster care and group residential care need opportunities to establish themselves successfully as adults. Like all young people, they have strengths that must be supported and they need opportunities for positive development so they can successfully make the transition to adulthood. With the proper preparation, they can assume productive roles as members of their communities.

These youngsters have the same needs as other youths -- and the same contributions to make. They also have some special needs. Adjustment to adulthood and independence may be particularly difficult for young people in family foster care and group residential care who experienced abuse, neglect, and exploitation at an early age. Youngsters who leave the foster care system at age 18 have often been in care for a number of years. Reunification with parents or placement with relatives has not been possible, so long-term foster care has been their permanent plan.

The task of preparing older adolescents for independent adult living is a special challenge for the child welfare system. Child welfare agencies attempt to respond to these needs by developing and enhancing services that foster positive development and strengthen youngsters' ability to succeed. Some agencies have recognized and implemented the philosophy of positive youth development along with services that offer the full range of competencies youngsters need -- personal, academic, vocational, civic, and social -- as well as self-confidence in skill building.

Most agencies, however, need help to integrate a positive youth development focus and services that will help youngsters build the competencies they need. Young people's strengths must be developed and supported by social workers, foster parents, and youth workers who understand their needs for nurturance, guidance, empowerment, and challenge. Professional youth workers must be people who recognize the importance of youth development and the specific independent living competencies that young people need, who can engage youngsters in a constructive, empowering process, and who have the skills and resources to facilitate the transition from youth to adulthood.

In many areas of the country, public and voluntary child welfare agencies have effectively used Independent Living Program funds under Title IV-E to strengthen their capacity to prepare youths leaving the child welfare system with basic living skills, education, and employment preparation. These agencies view the Title IV-E Independent Living Program as an important resource that has supported the development and implementation of quality independent living services. Other agencies, however, have had difficulty providing young people with the level of preparation they need. These agencies cite limited resources, eligibility restrictions, lack of coordination with other programs in the community, and the emotional and behavioral problems that many youths experience because of abuse, neglect, and lack of a permanent home.

Development and implementation of independent living services must be based on the needs of young people in foster care for positive development. Specifically, the following steps need to be taken:

- **Continue to expand experiential services and a comprehensive range of independent living services based on a philosophy of positive youth development.** A mix of services based on this philosophy, tailored to the individual goals of each youth and incorporating the actual experience of living on one's own, has proven to be the most effective means of assisting youth through the transition to independent living. This approach needs further support and development.

- **Enhance the involvement of the community and young people themselves in the planning and delivery of services.** Community involvement in the preparation and support of youth is essential to the success of services that foster self-sufficiency. To support every adolescent's effort to make a successful transition from out-of-home care to adulthood, however, program planning must focus not only on agency resources, but also on young people themselves as community resources. Youth advisory groups can provide important information on the needs of young people and the relative effectiveness of services.

- **Strengthen aftercare services.** A lack of adequate aftercare is frequently a barrier to effective youth development and independent living programs. Innovative approaches, such as the use of volunteer mentors to maintain contact with young adults, need to be developed, shared, and practiced by agencies that provide services to youths after their discharge from out-of-home care.

- **Improve services to at-risk youths.** While young people in foster care are, in most respects, no different from youths who have lived their lives with their birth families, these young people are at greater risk because of their history of abuse or neglect. Youth development services must recognize that youths in foster care are at particular risk of becoming pregnant, abusing drugs or alcohol, contracting HIV, becoming homeless, or engaging in criminal behavior. Services for youth must be developed accordingly.

- **Expand housing resources for young people.** Transitional housing for youths is critically important, yet support for housing services is often lacking. Efforts must be made to develop funding resources that

support such services and make available a range of housing options as part of every independent living program.

- **Identify alternative funding sources for youth development.** Agencies need assistance in creatively accessing multiple sources of funding for program development, including Title IV-E Independent Living funds, alternative federal funding sources, state funding, and foundation and corporate donations. Expertise in creative resource development must be made available to programs.

- **Involve foster parents, child and youth care workers, and birth parents in preparing young people for independent living.** Foster parents and child and youth care workers must be viewed as youth development and independent living service providers so that they, too, are able to assist youths in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficient living. Efforts should be made to include birth families in the preparation process as well. Over half of all adolescents in foster care eventually return to their biological families.

- **Increase the level of federal Independent Living funding and permanently authorize the program.** Enhanced funding and permanent program status are essential to ensuring the effectiveness of the federal Independent Living Program. Because the program must be renewed by Congress periodically, many state and county administrators are unwilling to commit resources to expanding youth development and independent living services. Guaranteed federal support would greatly assist states in committing resources to ongoing independent living programs, expanding programs to reach more youths, hiring and training personnel, providing youths with individualized service plans, and strengthening aftercare services.

- **Conduct objective research on the outcomes for youths who have participated in youth development and independent living services.** Outcome-related research is invaluable to policy makers, youth advocates, administrators, and caseworkers in designing and implementing programs to meet the needs of young people. The current dearth of data makes future planning difficult. Research that objectively assesses the outcomes for youths who participate in youth development and independent living services as compared to youths who do not would provide information currently unavailable to policy makers and service providers.

Young people in the foster care system must not be forgotten as we advance youth development policies and programs. A coherent youth development agenda demands that all young people enjoy opportunities for positive development and preparation for adulthood.

DAVID S. LIEDERMAN, *Chief Executive Officer of the Child Welfare League of America since 1984, heads the oldest and largest voluntary organization in North America concerned with developing and improving services to abused, neglected and deprived children and their families.*

Implementing Positive Youth Development In Juvenile Justice

George E. Capowich

Major changes in youth policy are evident in all areas of social policy, and this is certainly the case in juvenile justice. The current move toward positive youth development (PYD) is fundamentally different from earlier policy shifts in the field. This time is different because PYD represents a shift in the philosophy that undergirds juvenile justice policy.

Past reform efforts concentrated heavily on new programs designed to address a special need. Innovative programs are needed, but implementing a new approach to teaching English skills, for example, does not affect the basic structure of the agency that hosts the program. Positive youth development, however, is more than a program; it is a new philosophical foundation for youth services that views youth as resources rather than only the recipients of services, and also seeks to involve youth actively in the programs and activities designed to benefit them. In addition, and perhaps most significantly, PYD moves away from a framework that seeks new programs intended to correct deficiencies in the client population. Positive youth development has a broader focus on underlying conditions and risk factors that account for the circumstances faced by today's youth. This implies new roles for agencies in their communities, new responsibilities for staff at all levels, and new roles for others (e.g., government, private industry) in the community.

Rather than attempting to describe an idealized vision of what PYD might look like within a juvenile justice setting, this essay addresses a few general issues regarding the implementation of a PYD philosophy. Regardless of the setting -- community supervision or secure institution -- shifting to PYD as an operating rationale presents real implementation challenges that must be confronted. Failure to recognize the scope of the change that PYD proponents advocate presents the danger that reform efforts will be short-lived or diluted. This means that PYD will begin to look like just another program instead of a fundamental shift in philosophy and direction of juvenile justice policy.

Anyone who has worked or done research in a juvenile justice agency (or any complex human service agency) knows that attempts to change come and go quite frequently. There is often weak commitment to the change and organizational conflict can easily undermine any innovation. It is not sufficient to rely on the promulgation of new policies followed by training in order to equip the staff to carry out the new policies. All levels of personnel should be involved in the change process, as should those receiving the benefits of the change.

Beyond implying a change in program content, PYD advocates a more fundamental shift in agency functions and roles. In order to be successful, the organizations, their staff, the clients, and the measures used to indicate progress also must change. Just as the earth must be prepared for plants to flourish, the institutions that carry out policies must be designed to support and nourish the new policies and approaches. If we assume that PYD policies will look considerably different from present policies and approaches, then our established institutions will have to change.

There are two examples from the juvenile justice field that illustrate the general points I have made thus far concerning the magnitude of change implied by a PYD framework and the need to prepare an appropriate context for PYD approaches to be successful. The first example concerns the effort to enhance the vocational skills of youth who are incarcerated. This effort, when it began in the California Youth Authority, did not operate under a PYD framework nor did it begin with a specific plan to address the various organizational and policy changes that were needed to support the innovative approach. Nevertheless, the practice of implementing this program illustrates thebroad scope of changes that were actually involved.

The second example concerns efforts in Oregon to shift the preventive role played by justice service agencies in Multnomah County. In this example, agency administrators and staff are charting a course that has justice agencies addressing factors that underlie delinquency.

REAL WORK AND TRAINING FOR INCARCERATED YOUTH

A few years ago the California Youth Authority (CYA) undertook a project that was designed to enhance the quality of vocational training that youth received while incarcerated. (This effort has since expanded beyond California with federally supported pilot projects in five states.) Besides seeking to enhance the quality of vocational preparation at its secure facilities, the CYA sought to improve the employment prospects of the youth when they are released. The facilities entered into agreements with private industry to provide employment on the grounds of the youth facilities. In each case, the company opened operations at the youth facility and employed some of the incarcerated youth. Some of the projects were:

- a reservations center for a major airline
- sheet metal preparation, construction
- packaging of supplies for a regional chain of fast food restaurants
- assembly of electronic circuit boards
- a bakery

In each case, the company operated on the facility's grounds and paid scale

wages to their employees. When this began, such programs were fairly common in adult corrections, but were rare in youth facilities.

As these programs developed and matured, several lessons regarding implementation became evident. The one that pertains directly to our consideration of PYD is that all segments of the organizations were affected directly. Although all levels of staff were not included in the initial implementation of the program, it soon became apparent that the various segments of the organizations were affected by the presence of private industry and had a role to play in the innovation's success.

All staff, including security, educational, administrative, and support services, were affected in fundamental ways. The facility's routine schedule had to be adapted in order to accommodate the demands of the work place. Meals, counseling sessions, and schooling had to be rearranged for those who worked. In addition, security procedures also had to change. For example, a common procedure for dealing with a problem such as a fight in one of the dorms was to institute a lockdown for all residents. This was incompatible with businesses' scheduling needs, so new steps were implemented that allowed workers to leave for work if they were not implicated directly in the problem at hand.

The changes went far beyond scheduling. Relations among the staff also were affected, as were relations between staff and residents. Administrators found themselves consulting with industry supervisors regularly about how best to integrate the company's needs with those of the facility. Supervisors were not the only ones who saw their authority shift within the organization. Staff-resident relationships also changed. Residents became empowered and sought more autonomy. This was due, in part, to the money the youth were earning as well as the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that seemed to come with participation in the program.

Although the programs survived, and even flourished at some of the sites, it is easy to see that the few changes I mentioned conflicted directly with the agencies' established operating routines. The youth workers needed more flexibility in their daily lives, and well-established power relationships had to be renegotiated. Traditional policies, procedures, and structures will not be adequate to carry out and refine a PYD approach.

NEW APPROACH TO PREVENTION

Juvenile justice has long been concerned with preventing delinquency, but the advent of PYD is leading to new approaches that require juvenile agencies to revisit their basic role in the community. Rather than continuing in traditional ways, youth service agencies (including juvenile justice) in Multnomah County, Oregon are exploring ways to become more proactive and to develop as a resource for the community.

These agencies are shifting their focus to resolving specific problems in ways that help the community enhance its capacity to solve problems and reduce risk factors that affect youth. The capacity or strength of community structures is a key to preventing delinquency at the community level, and justice agencies can be a resource in building such capacity.

For example, instead of a probation office being content with case management, the personnel can become more involved in marshalling the services needed to keep youth off probation, or give them the opportunity to get off probation early. This idea of justice agencies serving as a catalyst to organizing needed services for individuals as well as families and neighborhoods has taken root within the entire criminal justice system. For example, the latest efforts to guide police departments toward a more community-oriented focus often involve the police serving as the central coordinator of services for a neighborhood. Personnel in juvenile justice agencies, like their counterparts in the adult criminal justice system, see every day the glaring needs for services for residents. They are often in a good position to organize the services needed and see that they are delivered because of their regular contact with residents.

These two brief examples illustrate the enormity of the changes implied by a PYD philosophy. We should consider early the kind of organizations we need to begin to nurture PYD approaches. New policies and procedures, redesigned training, and a commitment from top management are all necessary, but not sufficient. Positive youth development contains elements that portend changes for all the major components of the justice system, including the staff, youth, and agency structures. Moreover, the changes that accompany PYD policies extend beyond the agencies themselves to the families of youth, the larger community, and the other agencies that juvenile justice cooperates with in their attempts to serve youth.

Positive youth development is a participatory strategy in that it envisions the active participation of young people. This participation needs to be extended to the implementation and operation of PYD, as well. Just as youth have insights to share with respect to the programs that serve them, so too do the staff. Preparing staff to assume the new roles contained in PYD approaches through additional training will not be enough to make the changes take root in the agencies. Involvement is key to achieving the necessary commitment. People are less likely to resist change if those who are affected by the change are active participants in shaping the change. PYD's content will be enriched if those who staff the line and supervisory positions are meaningful participants in the process.

GEORGE E. CAPOWICH *is an independent criminal justice consultant specializing in organizational issues, system-wide policy questions, and program evaluation.*

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